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THE SPHERE, APRIL 24, 1943
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Vol. CLXXIII No. 2257 WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED THE GRAPHIC APRIL 24 1943

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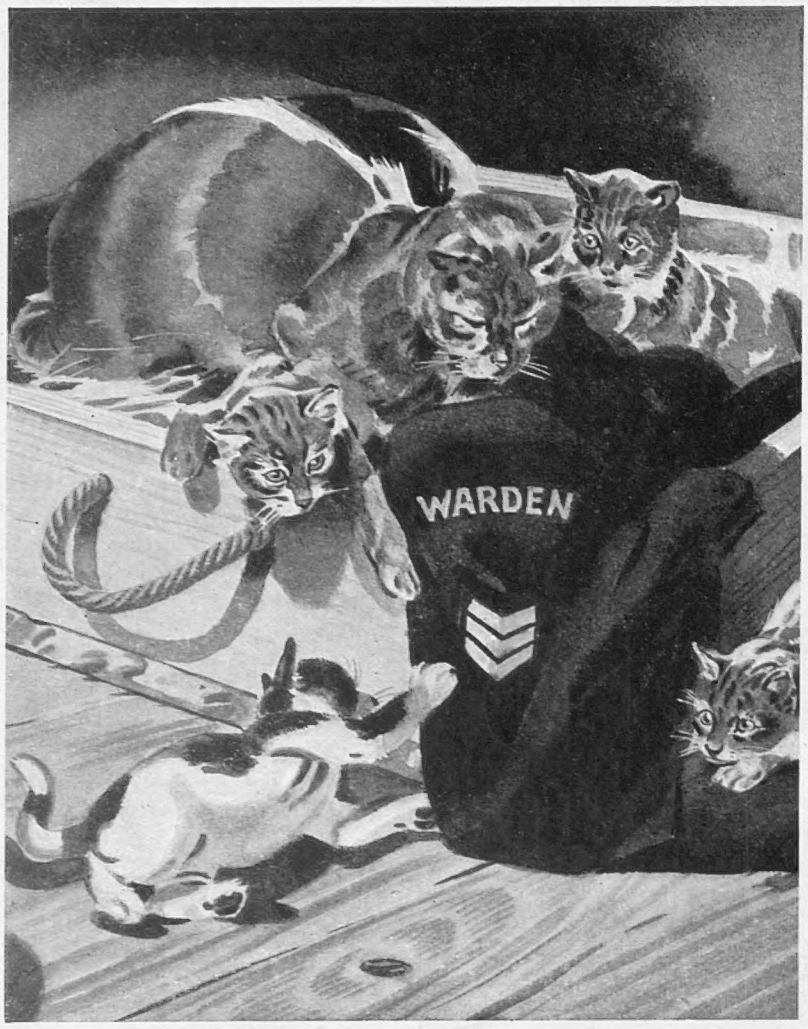

Until then . . .

When a Warden's coat is used as a bed for the cat and a useless cartridge box is a cradle for kittens the "All Clear" will have shrieked in triumphant finality. Until then, "put that light out" is more than a black-out warning. It is a reminder that unnecessary lights waste fuel. So let each one of us be a Fire Guard in the home—on duty over the poker, taking charge of the gas taps and ever on the alert for any waste of fuel.

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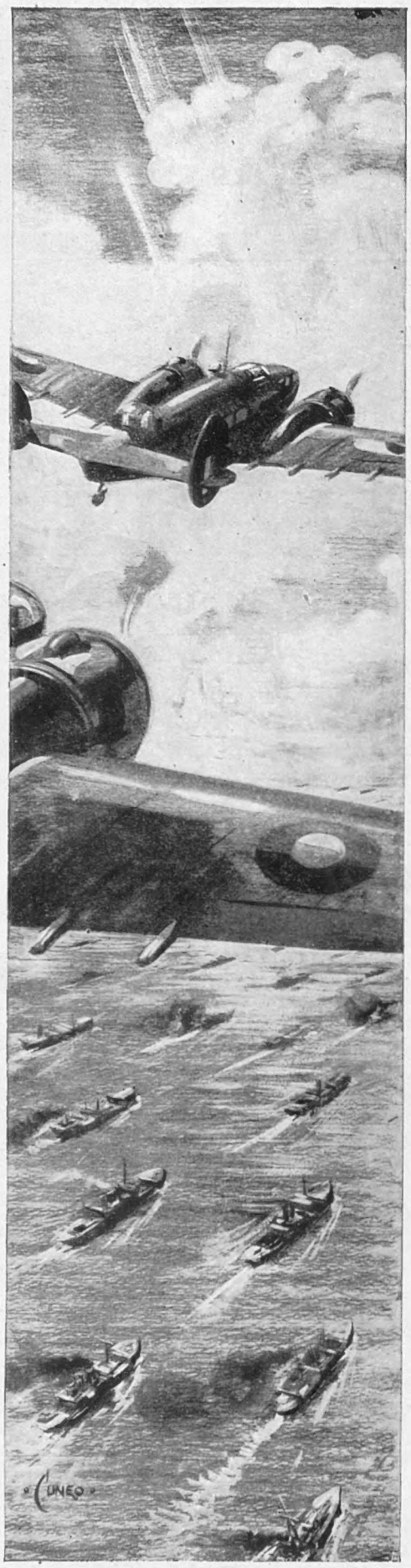
guarding the flock...—



From the ends
of the earth
they come . . . .
our precious ships
and their brave crews
through peril of storm
stalked by wolves
the wolves of the sea—
the U-boats
in packs.
But the Navy is there—
and overhead the
planes—
spotting—
bringing the convoy
Home
with its urgent load.
Food, raw materials,
Oil for the tanks,
Munitions—
to feed
the gathering force
of the great assault—
the final blow!
Precious cargoes
precious men—
and the wolves are many
They multiply
they swarm.
They prowl ceaselessly.
But the convoy
comes home,
for our planes
are overhead
Spotting, swooping,
striking—
guarding the flock.

* * * *

What are we on the home front doing in the war against the U-boats? It is our part to work harder and to save more . . . . to stop waste, to save food and fuel and CUT OUR SPENDING. That is the vital support which we must give to the seamen and the airmen who risk their lives for us. The great thing at this moment when the dawn is breaking is to SAVE MORE.

...— Wings for Victory

Issued by the National Savings Committee

Volume CLXXIII No. 2257 The SPHERE, London, April 24, 1943

THE SPHERE
With which is incorporated "THE GRAPHIC"
The Empire's Illustrated Weekly

GUNNERS OF THE EIGHTH ARMY IN THE MARETH AREA: PART OF "THE FINEST FIGHTING FORCE THE WORLD HAS EVER KNOWN": A picture of a group of these tough warriors who have pursued Rommel from Egypt to the outskirts of Tunis

From all over the world during the past few weeks has come a perfect chorus of praise for the Eighth Army, and for the tough British and Dominion troops who have fought so brilliantly in its ranks from Alexandria to Tunis. Not only have they carried out the greatest advance in the shortest space of time in military history; they have also out-fought, and soundly routed, the pick of the Axis Army—the much-vaunted and greatly publicised Afrika Korps. Even in Italy high praise has been bestowed on the "perfectly trained" infantry with "great fighting spirit." Throughout every action from Alamein to the Wadi Akarit, the foot-soldiers have been worthily supported by the artillery: the terrific barrages which they have laid down have contributed enormously to the overwhelming of Rommel. It has been all-out gunnery all the time, which left the enemy little time for sleep in the many stand-up engagements through Egypt, Cyrenaica, Tripolitania and Tunisia. The gunners themselves come from many walks of life—miners, tilers, spinners, clerks and the like—and never have they failed to live up to General Montgomery's demands. How they fought, and in what attire, is suggested in this picture taken during a lull within the Mareth area

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A WAR NEWSLETTER —No. 190

1, NEW OXFORD STREET, W.C.1.

Easter Comes Late.—Easter falls this year as late as possible. An Easter day on the confines of May is as rare as snow in May, and I hope it will not produce a double event in rarities. The message of Easter is the message of renewed Hope. It is documented by the symbolic Egg, signifying renaissance, and painted by the colours of spring flowers and sung by the birds. This year the Easter Message has been discounted in advance, and a very early spring has helped to set the fool's-cap on an Easter fixed by cabbalistic signs and formulæ. We come to Easter with the scene set for Whitsuntide. Some of the new features of a normal June are already here. The blossom of the fruit-trees is long since vanished and the trees are vulnerable to late frosts. The flowering cherries are all blown, the daffodils of Easter are faded, and even the azaleas are largely things of the past. And the chorus of birds is not what it was, and the tender green of larch and birch and chestnut has deepened into profusion and maturity. In a war such as this we base our hopes more on brass tacks than symbols, no doubt. We count more on a turn in our favour on the far-flung battle front than on the dancing of daffodils. And these turns for the better have not been wanting. All the same, Easter is a sweet season in war or peace, and in war uncountable difficulties of living vanish for a few months when Easter comes round again.

Faith.—I am not well qualified to treat of matters of religion in a popular journalistic way, lacking the knowledge of Monsignor Knox and the common touch of the Radio Padre. But I often puzzle my head these days about the definition of faith and its nature, finding St. Paul's famous definition somewhat obscure. We have survived this war to a stage when victory looks like an ultimate certainty, through years when an Allied victory looked to neutral eyes like a 100–1 chance (no takers), largely by blind faith. When in the darkest days Mr. Churchill cried to America: *Give us the tools and we will finish the job*, his statement may have embraced the substance of things he hoped for, but the *evidence* to-day seems to us not indeed evidence of things unseen, but of things not to be seen because non-existent. That statement, confidently made, was surely the greatest bluff in all history, the noblest instance of faith based on nothing at all but blind courage and an obstinate refusal to admit staring defeat and to accept patent facts. America gave us the tools, and we did not finish, and could not conceivably have finished, the job. What we have done is to do our quota; and the job is by no means finished. When Churchill spoke his glorious bluff, he envisaged Britain fighting alone against the Axis, with an inimical Russia and an America militarily neutral, but supplying us with armaments. Looking back now on the *facts* which lay behind the curtain of the future—facts invisible to any eye (unless the Eye of Faith?)—we gasp at the impertinence of that declaration; 350,000,000 Russians—fanatical fighters and utterly selfless—took over suddenly more than half the whole burden of fighting Nazism; the might and wealth and millions of America took the field, the air, the seas, as well as manning the workshops beyond our wildest dreams; real aid in a smaller way came from France and other enslaved countries; the Axis made many unforeseeable mistakes . . . and still the job, which we alone were to "finish" with

SOUTH AFRICA'S FAMOUS FIRST DIVISION RETURN TO CAPETOWN FOR LEAVE: Lined up for dismissal at the Dispersal Centre, the men did not get a chance to break up in the usual manner, as their relatives got down to the job of greeting them! The men of this Division fought right through the Abyssinian campaign, then helped to chase the Italians out of Libya, lost a large section of their personnel at Tobruk, but put up a great show with the remainder at El Alamein, when they helped to start Rommel on his last dash out of Egypt

American tools, is not half done, though certain to be done. Here was faith fantastic, faith insane, faith justified not by facts or evidence, only by blind courage and obstinacy, only by making the impossible possible by means utterly unimagined. If this is faith, if faith can indeed move such mountains as these, then it were a poor spirit, an ungrateful, mean soul that does not pin its faith on blind faith. It has seemed to me of late that the statesmen of this country are having another gamble in futures, not less mad and monstrous than that to which I have referred. They are pinning their faith in the resettlement of this country and the world, after the war is won, on the expectation that human nature has in the testing-time of world war undergone a permanent change for the better. The evidence of history spurns the possibility. War is total evil; its aftermath total corruption of character. Straws of evidence from day to day show that, with every success or relief from anxiety in the ding-dong of war, the old failings creep back, and self-interest, party ambitions, class jealousies and petty preoccupations rear their heads again. Nothing in our experience suggests that our character, refined in war, can stand the temptations of even a week's "relaxation" at the Armistice. Yet, unless our character stands the test and withstands the temptations, our planners build on sand and raise a tottering and empty façade. The dilemma stares me in the face; the bogy grins hideously at me. And then I snatch at the straw of Churchill's great faith—bluff. Perhaps we shall pull off this other, this second "greatest bluff in history"—by the very impudence of our blind faith. Perhaps we are right to gamble on the "impossible"; perhaps our faith will make the impossible possible again. Perhaps human nature will change for the better at last, and unpredictable evolution win for blind faith a golden future which all human evidence rejects as phantasy.

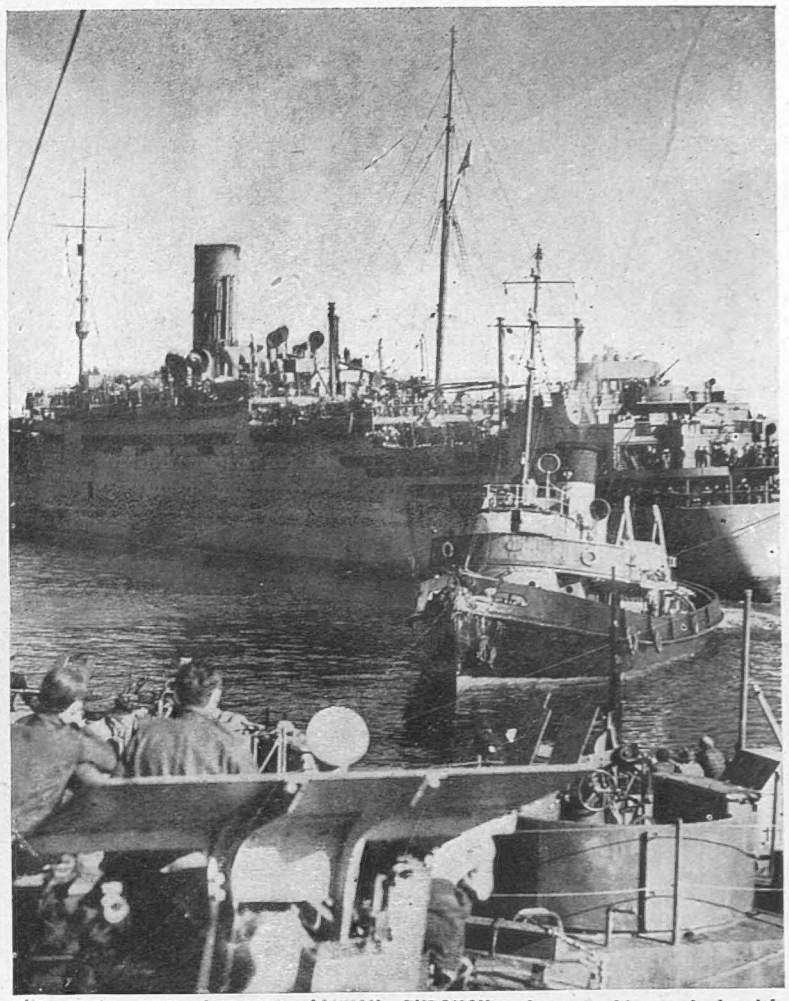
Courtesy Pays—Even in War.—The military authorities very properly enjoy the widest powers of requisitioning private property when it is needed for the bivouacking or training of the troops, and there can be few owners of land who do not appreciate the necessity for these powers, and regard it as a privilege to "entertain" the Army for a night or two *en passant*. I can believe that these emergency powers do not lay on the "billeting" officers who make the allocation of camps in advance any duty of notifying the owner or warning him; certainly no obligation to obtain "consent." Yet the act of courtesy ("old world," perhaps) of warning the landowner of what is afoot would not greatly add to the "billeting" officer's labours and, time and again, would benefit the troops by the pre-discovery of local conditions affecting their comfort. Twice during the war my own few acres of woodland have been used for encampments of staging troops. On neither occasion was this courtesy paid me. As a result, the troops were totally ignorant that water hereabouts is as rare as champagne, and they spent the first two days piteously begging from us water we could not produce, even in petrol-tin quantity. They came in in ignorance of the danger in a dry spring season of lighting bivouac fires upon peat-bed foundations. They came in in innocent belief that all standing and lying wood was theirs to cut and burn, for making bivouacs and fires, and they cleared us (as ants pick a dead animal's body) completely of all the firewood we had painfully collected for next year's sawing and burning, and cheerfully cut down a grove of chestnut already sold for cutting next season. God knows our Army deserves, and is welcome to, all we can afford, yet a little gesture of courtesy sweetens even gratitude, and sometimes even pays the giver. In my own experience of war, I have known courtesy pay even in the heat of a battle.

Waxworks and Max Works.—Sir Max Beerbohm is giving the Rede Lecture at Cambridge this year. Excellent as the matter and manner of his discourse will doubtless be, I wish that he could turn his genius on to a very topical and exciting subject—the mystery of the Hitler of 1943. I wish that he could turn back the pages of his own works to his "Some Words on Royalty," which appeared in one of the best of his little volumes of essays, *More*. In that essay he drew upon the *Memoirs of Count X.* (privately printed in 1906), and drew the veil away from certain subterfuges adopted by Sovereigns and Heads of State who have either grown bored with public functions or go in dread of assassination, or are otherwise unfit for (or unnerved to carry out in person) their arduous public appearances. Count X. revealed that the famous Emperor he served so faithfully reached this impasse, and conceived the idea of a waxwork representation of himself, mechanically furnished to bow and smile on crowds, to raise its hand in salute and so forth. Once at least this wax figure, which served the Emperor to admiration, received a bullet intended for its original. Luckily, the bullet missed the mechanism, and, indeed, the Emperor, who was standing in the crowd wearing a false beard, was arrested on suspicion, but later released. It occurs to me that Hitler, and, perhaps, Mussolini, had long ago access to the works of Max B., and perhaps long since adopted (and adapted by modern scientific invention) this very device. Always in the photographs of their famous meetings and appearances, I have doubted their *reality*. Those new and creased and absurd uniforms and field boots, and those stiff salutes had an air of unreality, and more than a hint of Tussaud. Advances in phonography have put at their disposal the means of evading the most onerous of all their duties—public ranting—and the waxwork figure's mechanism could easily include revolving discs for public speeches and boasts. (Thus, Hitler's "historical record" has been used constantly since 1939 and now is clearly nearly worn down.) The more I consider it, the more certain I am that Count X.'s revelations *were* turned to good account by the Dictators. And I like to think (philosophers could make great play with the theory) that this long agony of humanity, prolonged and endured by 1,000,000,000 human beings to the limit of endurance, has been stimulated, controlled and kept going all these years by a couple of waxworks cunningly contrived. Yes, by Heaven, it 's more than a theory! It 's a fact. All these years the figures have worked, and all the little complementary marionette-figures have pirouetted in time to the tune of the Dance of Death. War is so absurd that the most fantastic theory to explain its persistence is less absurd than the reality it accounts for. What a subject for the Rede (or any other) lecture! And the Punch and Judy show is still running—and likely to outdo *Charley's Aunt* and *Chu-Chin-Chow*.

THE OLD STAGER

THE TROOP TRANSPORTS GET THROUGH TO NORTH AFRICA IN CONVOY

ABOARD A TROOPSHIP CARRYING MEN OF THE R.A.F. OVERSEAS. At the moment when this picture was taken a concert was in progress on the deck. All the vantage points were occupied by the audience, but the vigilance of the gunners and the men on look-out never relaxed as the big vessel ploughed steadily ahead. The R.A.F. are already wearing their tropical kit, it will be observed



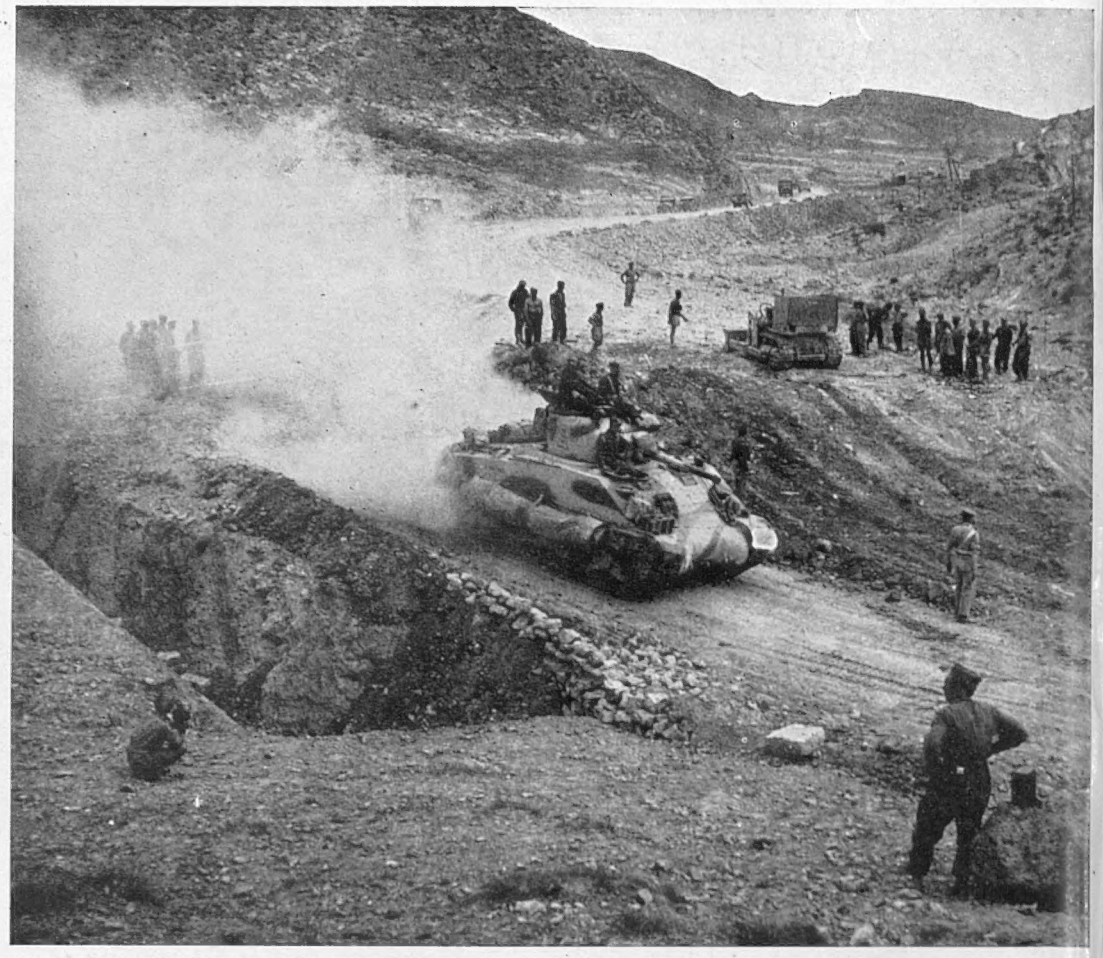
THE NAVY SEES ANOTHER CONVOY THROUGH. A steamship packed with British troops berthing at a North African port after having been escorted safely across many miles of sea. In the foreground can be seen the crews of British minesweepers watching with interest, as they were responsible for sweeping the channel through which the convoy passed

A "FLOATING FORTRESS" OF THE BRITISH NAVY AT WAR: The band of the Royal Marines playing on the fo'c'sle to an audience made up of the ship's company. The vessel is one of the capital ships of the Royal Navy, which is such a powerful menace to German ambitions. Note the size of the huge guns and heavily armoured turrets; note also the aircraft on its catapult, whence it is shot into the air for reconnaissance at sea. This picture was taken whilst the great battleship was in harbour at its base

Tank-Mounted Guns in Tunisia

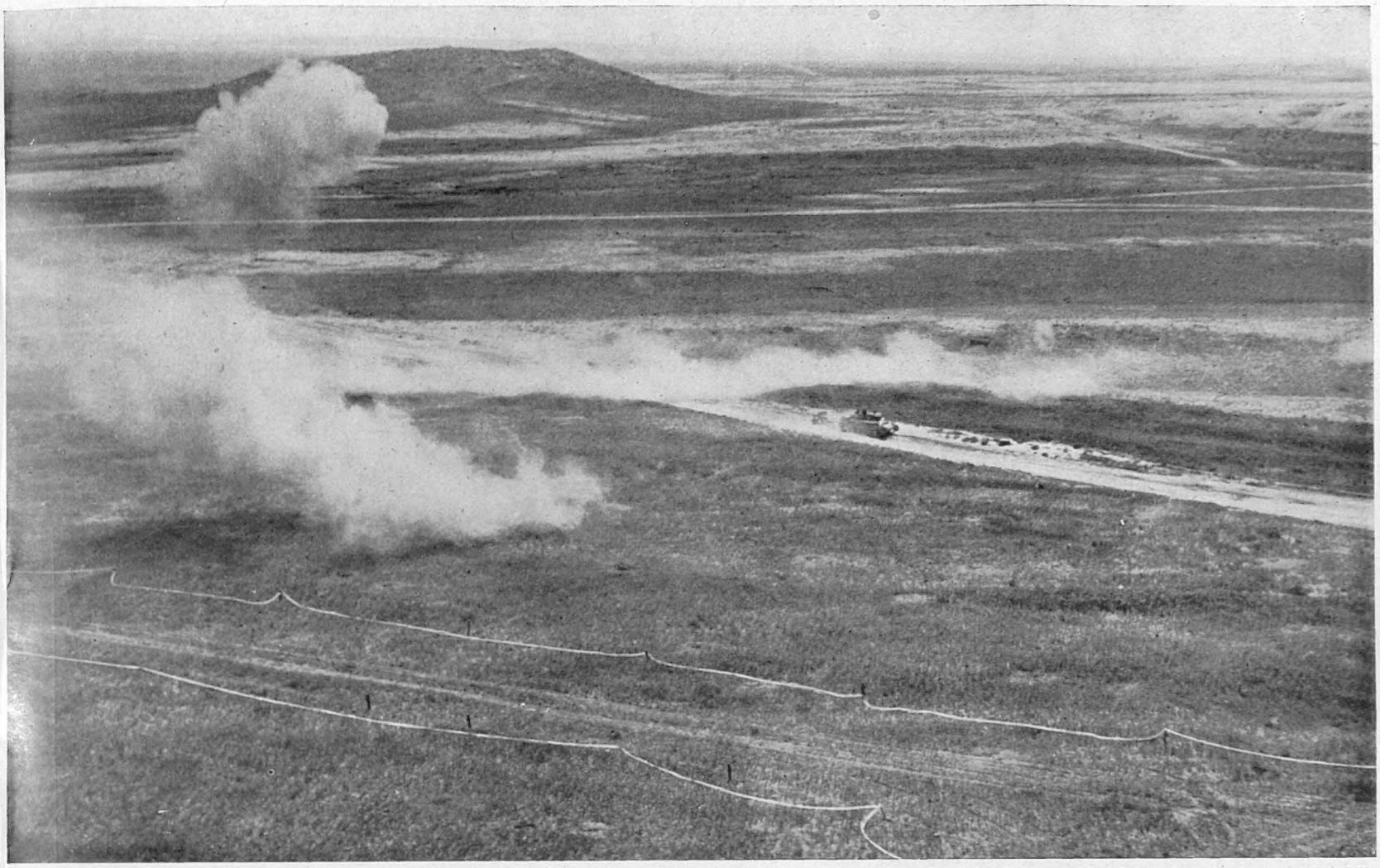
For further Pictures from this Battle Zone see also pages 104-105 and 110-115 of this Issue

AN ITALIAN GENERAL CAPTURED IN TUNISIA : General Mannerini, Commander-in-Chief of the "Saharan Group," was captured on April 8 whilst trying to withdraw the last of his men. He was cut off by New Zealanders. In the last war, while fighting with the Allies, the General was awarded the Military Cross. He now goes to swell the already great number of captured Italian Generals



HOW ROAD DEMOLITIONS WERE OVERCOME AT THE GABES GAP : This road had been blown up by the enemy; Royal Engineers at once put down a temporary surface so that the tanks could pass through and then set about reinstating the road. The picture above was taken in the Oudref area just before the battle of the Wadi Akarit, where Rommel's defensive line in front of Sfax was broken

CAPTURED BY THE NEW ZEALANDERS : A German eight-wheeled armoured car which has had a 75-mm. gun built into it. Ever since the battle of Knightsbridge, Army has been largely decided by mobile artillery. Each side has striven to mount bigger and bigger pieces of ordnance on self-propelling vehicles, so that rapid of battle ebbed and flowed. This massive vehicle is one of the latest German solutions of the problem



THIS IS THE ACTUAL "GABES GAP": In reality the "Gap" is a wide plain which leads from the hilly country around the Mareth Line to the Tunisian plain to the north. The main road running through it is here seen, with a British tank moving forward. The enemy are shelling the Gap after its capture by the Eighth Army. In the foreground may be seen the tapes put up by the Sappers to indicate the route to be followed by vehicles and men through enemy minefields

in Libya, the struggle between the Axis and the Eighth advance and withdrawal might be made possible as the tide

BIGGER AND BIGGER GUNS FOR THE FIRST ARMY. The vehicle seen here is a Valentine chassis, upon which a 25-pounder gun has been mounted—a most formidable combination! The gunners, it will be seen, work in an armour-plated "box" on top of the chassis. In the background is "Grenadier Hill," in Northern Tunisia, scene of some bitter fighting in the earlier stages of the present campaign: snow is still lying on its upper slopes. The 25-pounder is one of the most successful ordnance pieces possessed by our Tunisian armies

TIME and the OCCUPIED COUNTRIES

The Oppressed Peoples have Stood Much and Suffered Greatly. Their Hour of Deliverance is Fast Approaching . . . By FERDINAND TUOHY

WE seem to be approaching another cycle in the occupied countries. There have been two or three such periods before, when hope has risen only to fall again after a few months, with varying effect on the divers populations whose trials have not been equal in severity or duration. How long can they stand it? we ask again to-day. Well, this is how long they have stood it so far:—Czechoslovakia, 49 months; Poland, 44 months; Norway and Denmark, 36 months; Holland and Belgium, 35 months; France, 34 months; Yugoslavia and Greece, 24 months; Occupied Russia, 21 months.

Denmark has had the lightest passage and Poland the cruellest; further than which, it is hardly in taste to scale the relative sufferings of others. Rather would I suggest that the grand tragedy of Occupied Europe entered its first clearly defined period in June 1940, and that this spell lasted until the December following. By June, Hitler's conquering had fairly stunned his victims, who, if they hoped at all, did so more by some inner glow than by reason. This waiting for the inevitable went on through the summer and autumn. But by early winter, news of three almost unbelievable occurrences began to percolate in the occupied countries. The R.A.F. had smashed the *Luftwaffe* from the sky of Britain; Greece had thrashed the Italians; and Wavell had sent Graziani reeling out of Egypt.

Hope stirred, spread. For four months it continued to spread, and here salute the European Service of the B.B.C., which seized upon this splendid surprise-period to gain a hold on the hearts and minds of Europeans that it has only increased ever since. It was now that resistance first became a reality in a small, haphazard way. London, victor of the blitz, had the aura of a Verdun. Only for hopes to be dashed again in April and May, when Hitler overran Yugoslavia and Greece, pulverised the British in amazing air-borne style on Crete, and flung them back to Egypt. No getting away from it—the man was a super-Napoleon!

The summer and autumn of 1941 continued to be all Hitler's. If he had saddled himself with the Red Army, was he not walking through it? Soon he would return west for the kill. In the meantime, he contrived almost nonchalantly to hold the British in the West and Middle East while savaging their sea-borne communications. This was a very delicate period in the will to resist of several of the occupied countries, which fact may have accounted for the premature launching of the V campaign. By raising hopes which could never by any manner of means be met, this radio exhorting showed how tricky a business the guidance of cruelly afflicted lands can be.

Then, for the second time in succession, December came to the rescue. Again great news percolated in the occupied countries—this time, that Russia had decisively defeated Hitler before Moscow, that the Axis was again on the run in Libya, and that America was in the war!

Another cycle was opening. Hope rose again. The whirlwind overrunning by Japan in the South-West Pacific was too far away to generate dejection in persecuted Europe, though the American disaster at Pearl Harbour did sensibly lower spirits as its extent gradually became known. Still, afflicted Europe balanced against that the fact that Americans were fighting Hitler beside British and Russians, who had each positively repelled and defeated the common torturer.

Yes, hopes rose anew between January and June of 1942, if only because for the first time Hitler seemed incapable of doing anything. After St. Nazaire, in March, which was partly responsible for the call for a "Second Front," the maritime countries of Western Europe looked expectantly for invasion from day to day. Escaped personalities advised that the continual disappointment produced a neurotic, nervous state. More serious, the underground movements, by this time being organised, needed to be better integrated with the strategy and intentions of the Allies outside. Hitler had begun his mass-murdering of hostages in addition to his other crimes, and it was thoroughly bad policy to spur the occupied countries so that they acted prematurely, and thereby suffered unnecessarily. So the V campaign was practically dropped. Since which time it has been revived only on special occasions, usually woven into warnings such as went out with the Dieppe probing-cum-demonstration.

Hope springs eternal? Maybe. But keeping it alive has been no mean job. Down it went again last June when, simultaneously, Hitler surged forward to the Volga and the Caucasus, and beat the British back almost to the Nile. The Americans had evidently come too late, sadly calculated stricken Europe. This cycle lasted once again through the summer and autumn, and it was more cruel than any previous period of dejection, because, during it, Hitler radically altered his attitude towards his victims. Heretofore, despite all the looting, the shooting and concentration camps, Hitler kept up a pretence that the occupied countries were collaborating towards his New Order. Now he openly treated them as hostile, and announced countermeasures. There would be labour conscription and deportation to Germany and the Terror for all who opposed.

Next time it was November, not lucky December, that brought relief and caused a lacerated Continent to breathe in a manner it must have almost forgotten. The British rushing towards Tripoli; the Americans and British in magical possession of most of French North Africa; the Russians about to explode Hitler at Stalingrad. Through all their tears and suffering, 1943 was the most stimulating New Year yet for the occupied countries. Nor has anything really happened since to dispel hopes risen as never before. The Russians have been beaten back in the south to positions whence Hitler may soon try a final leap at Moscow or Baku, but, against this, the Axis is finished in Africa, meaning new avenues of succour to Occupied Europe, and the Germans are being as mercilessly bombed in their own country as they used to bomb others, a retribution which may sustain the occupied countries more than is allowed for.

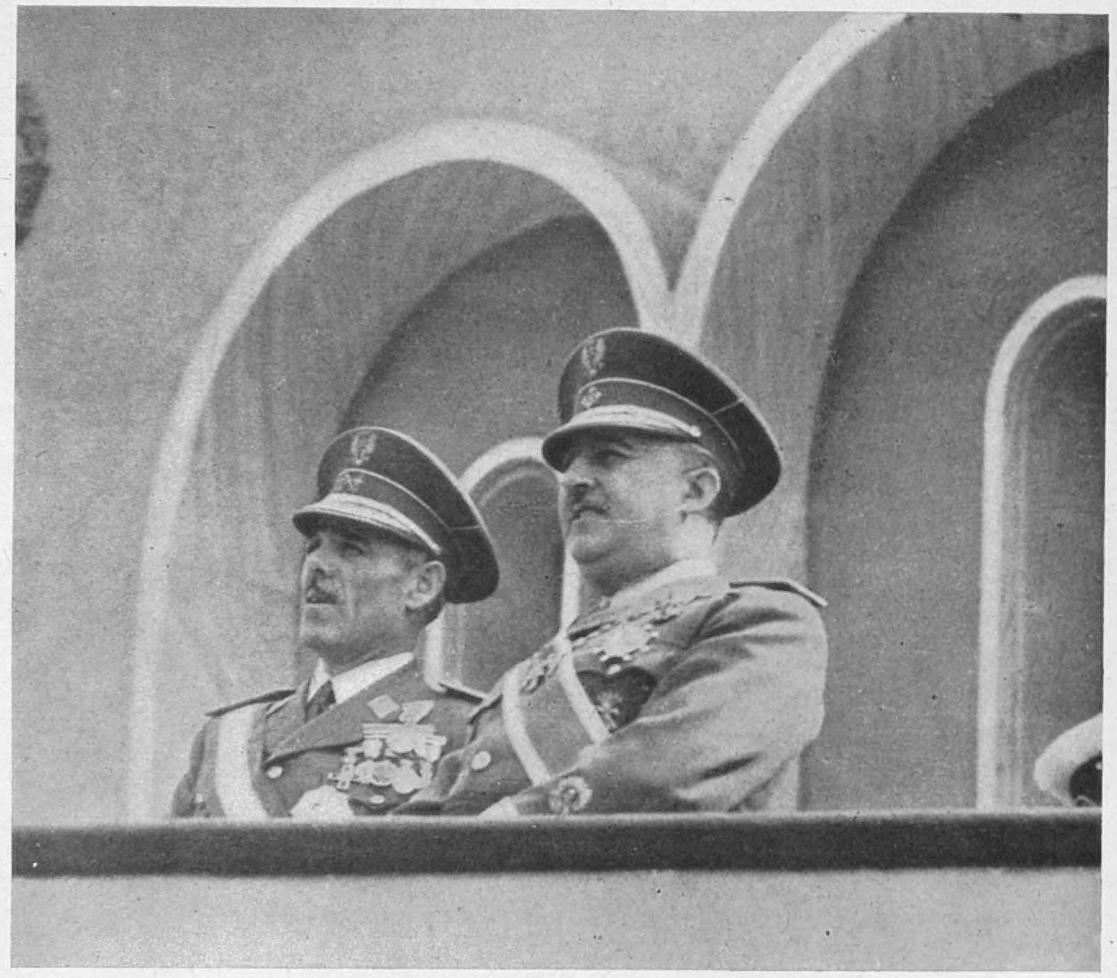
Yet these countries are no longer what they were even last autumn. Since then they have experienced their worst sufferings, and these are intensified week by week. To the millions of prisoners whose voices must now return with difficulty to many who loved them best, are being added millions of civilians, torn from their homes and freighted to Germany, particularly all youths and men who might turn *francs-tireurs* beside the invading Allies. As slaves in Germany, all must endure terrible bombing. Several of the occupied countries, too, are being asked to stand up to Allied cascade-bombing—people, don't forget, in the fourth year of grief, hunger and weariness of body and soul that now can hardly be accentuated. The shootings mount, the concentration camps overflow. The Continent that faces us is taut and stretched to the limit. They may have 500 underground newspapers; their hopes may never have been higher; but their physical state has never been lower, nor their mental anguish been more ravaging.

Moreover, while this goes on, the Berlin octopus steadily entwines its victims in a way that does not assail the eye. The Germans collar the vested interests in Central and Western Europe, by giving vast orders to industries there, and they manage to win attention from the peasant masses by supplying agricultural machinery on a lease-lend basis. This is the kind of thing which would stand the Germans in good stead did the Allies experience invasion difficulties of a nature liable to turn minds in the occupied countries towards a compromise peace. By a combination of wearing these peoples down, and showing them how dreadfully they are injured by Allied battling, the Germans have hopes still.

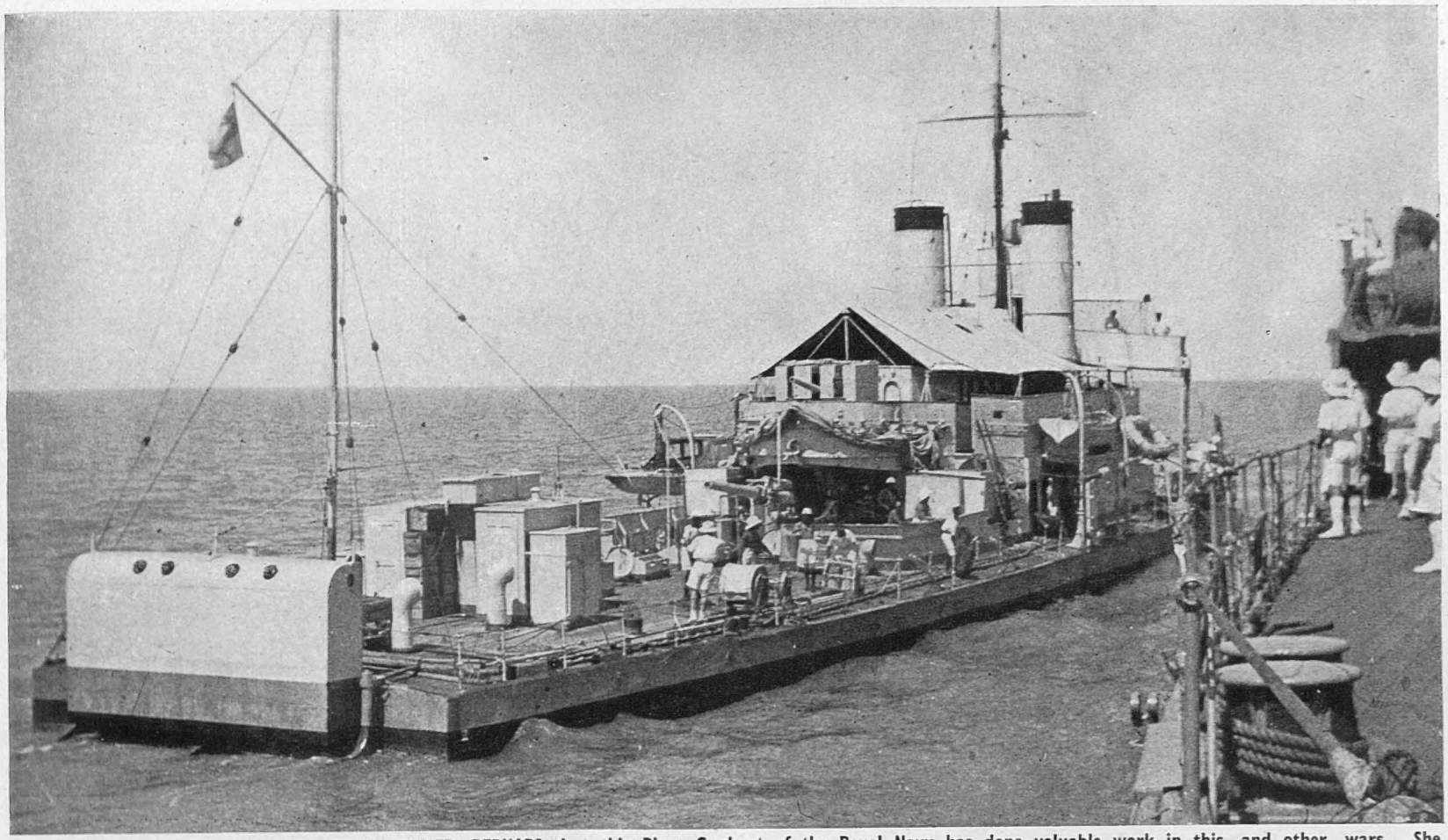
So when Moscow sends out: "Don't imagine that because people have stood up for a thousand days, they can do so for a thousand more," this is surely greater sense than when others discuss enormous hosts for Hitler's undoing in 1945 or 1946? That kind of talk is death to the occupied countries. As Jan Masaryk puts it: "A prolonged war will make Europe a vast cemetery where all people worth while will be buried." Even now the Nazis are doing something which it is already too late to avert—imprisoning leading Europeans whose lives they will barter against those of their own leaders. Let people who hold forth on punishment for German criminals think that one out. As the occupied countries enter the latest cycle, which will evidently last through the summer into the autumn, fortunately the forces that matter here are utterly comprehending of what is at stake. A failure in invading simply cannot be risked, but nor can a perpetuation of the moral and physical trials of the occupied countries until the last Allied button is affixed. A mean has to be struck.

Taking the tale up to to-day, the occupied countries have responded memorably to every hope held out. To imagine oneself in their shoes, is to swear to that. The very figures of those who have failed are sufficient testimony—100,000 in Holland and less in Belgium; 83,000 in Denmark and less in Norway; perhaps 500,000 in France and less in Poland and Czechoslovakia; a handful in Yugoslavia and Greece and a dreadful nothingness to report from occupied Russia.

These peoples who now see their countries likely to be used as Hitler's hard glacis of defence, with all the new ghastliness this must entail—these peoples who are ready for a general strike and ready to leap with joy towards every Allied aircraft bearing arms or taking them to fight—are assuredly deserving of the gravest understanding now, and of every priority to-morrow, leading off with food and medicine and the rescue of their prisoners and slaves.



AS THE SPANISH ARMIES PARADED THROUGH THE STREETS OF MADRID. General Franco, Head of the State and Commander-in-Chief of the Army, reviewed the crack troops of his armed forces and the Militia of the Falange Party on the fourth anniversary of the end of the Civil War. The march-past was held in the Castellana, one of Madrid's main streets (now renamed the Avenida del Generalissimo, in Franco's honour). This picture shows the Caudillo in the special reviewing stand, with General Carlos Asensio, his War Minister, on his right hand. General Franco is wearing the regulation Spanish Army cap and uniform, in place of the red béret and dark-blue shirt of the Falange which he wore during previous celebrations of this kind

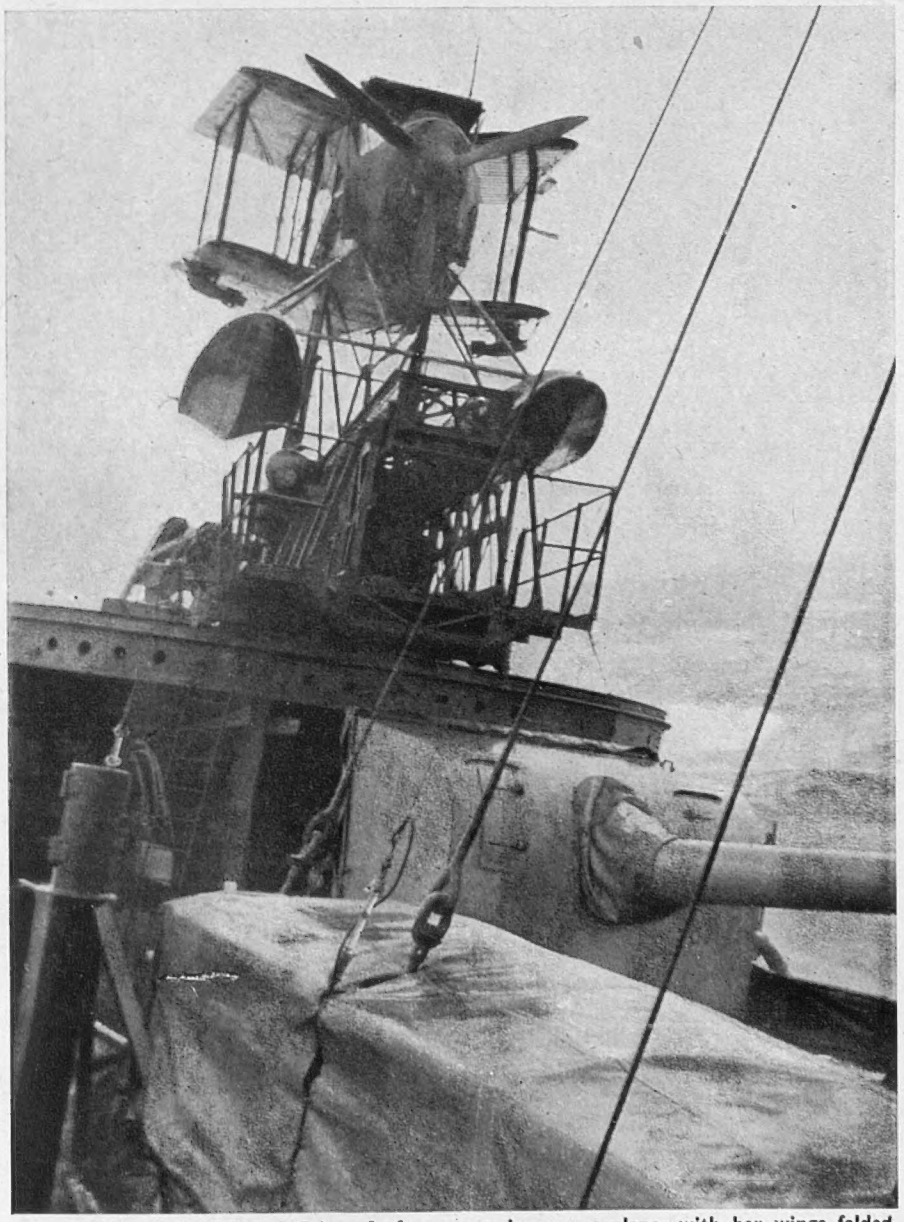


NOT SO DASHING AS A DESTROYER OR A CRUISER, PERHAPS, but this River Gunboat of the Royal Navy has done valuable work in this, and other, wars. She is H.M.S. "Cockchafer" and she has been employed on tasks in the Persian Gulf

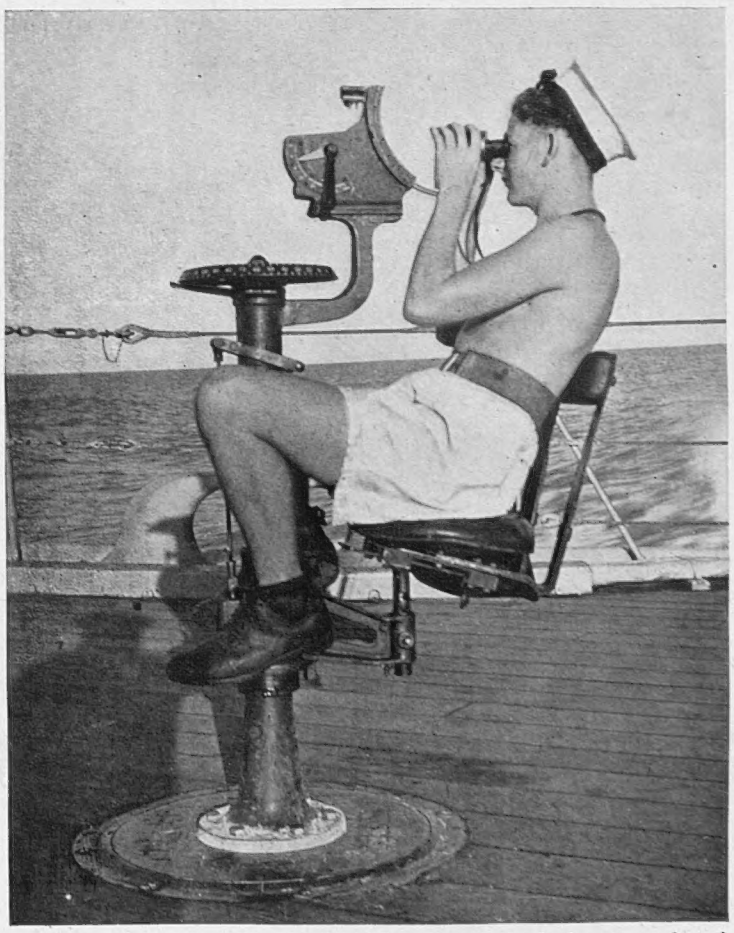
AN OLD LADY of the NAVY

And Two Other Unusual Scenes From the British Fleet

Cockchafer is one of a class of seven vessels which, ordinarily, do not receive much publicity in either peace or war! She is a River Gunboat, built (like her sisters) in the year 1915, of specialised design for specialised work. She has a displacement of 625 tons; a length of 237 ft. and—a very special item of her design—a draught of only 4 ft.! This, of course, is so that she can operate in shallow waters and in rivers. Her two big guns are both of 6-in. calibre, and she also mounts a 3-in. anti-aircraft gun and ten smaller weapons. Her speed is 14 knots, and the complement of this type of vessel would range from 56 to 65. Messrs. Yarrow and Co., the famous shipbuilders, were solely responsible for the design of these flat-bottomed gunboats, which were all built under their supervision during the last war



THE EYES OF A CRUISER: A Fairey Seafox reconnaissance seaplane, with her wings folded back, perched up on her launching catapult: A cruiser at sea must maintain a constant watch in every direction. The Seafox is one of the aircraft operated by the Royal Navy to achieve this purpose. This unusual type provides for the pilot in an open cockpit in front, with the observer sitting behind and above in another, but covered, cockpit. The plane is mounted on floats, and it is launched from a catapult: for convenience of stowage the wings fold back. The speed of the Seafox is a maximum of 124 m.p.h., but for cruising purposes it flies at about 106 m.p.h. It has a duration at the latter speed of 4¼ hours, and an effective range of 440 miles.



COMFORT IN ATTIRE—AND IN POSTURE: One of the look-outs on board a cruiser seated in his specially adaptable "barber's chair." By adjustments in the latter he can watch both the distant horizon and the skies up above

The CAPTURE of the GABES GAP

How this Narrow, Strategic Stretch was Captured by the Eighth Army in Tunisia

AT THE FAMOUS GABES GAP AFTER THE EIGHTH ARMY HAD BROKEN THROUGH : A long-focus picture from an advanced Observation Post on a hill, showing tanks and other British vehicles moving through for the pursuit of the beaten enemy to the Wadi Akarit. The Gabes Gap is ten miles to the north of the town of Gabes in the Oudref area. Here road and railway running north from Gabes meet the road from El Guettar. The Gap itself is only seven miles so far as the manœuvring of tanks is concerned. As soon as our tanks had passed through, large numbers of Italians were captured in the vicinity of this strategic point

VEHICLES AND INFANTRYMEN OF THE EIGHTH ARMY MOVING THROUGH THE GABES GAP IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE BREAK-THROUGH. This picture demonstrates the tactical method evolved by General Montgomery of using foot soldiers with the heavy fighting vehicles. After the break-through at the Gap, a way was cleared for the tanks through the heavily mined areas, and then infantry and tanks went forward in concert, with New Zealanders in the vanguard. Once through the Gap, the country opens out to the northwards until the Wadi Akarit in front of Sfax is reached

ARMOURED VEHICLES OF THE EIGHTH ARMY CROSSING AN ANTI-TANK DITCH through lanes taped off by Sappers during the break-through at the Gabes Gap. As at Mareth, these ditches provided a very real obstacle to the big vehicles until the Engineers had laid down fascines at various points and thus provided a way across. Soon a great array of tanks and other fighting vehicles were streaming forward in parallel lines on to Akarit. The tapes laid down on the ground showed the way to the various crossing-points. Soldiers with automatic rifles and Bren guns took up positions on points of vantage to overcome any attempt by the enemy to interfere with the forward movement: but the only troops left behind in the district, mainly Italians, were soon within prison laagers!

A SCENE WITHIN THE MARETH LINE AS THE BRITISH GUNS PASSED THROUGH TOWARDS GABES. These are the famous 25-pounders, with their towing lorries, or "Quads"—the guns which throughout the campaign in Africa have wrought such great havoc amongst the enemy, both against his infantry and as anti-tank weapons against his armour. Note the poor nature of the road surface in the above picture

BOMBS ON THE VILLAGE OF MARETH during the Eighth Army's operations in the vicinity of the famous Line: a light bomber of the South African Air Force comes in to the attack

The AIR FORCES of the ALLIES

In Operations over the European Continent and Tunisia—*Special Sphere Drawings*

THE PILOT OF A LIGHT BOMBER gives details of the number of bombs he has dropped and the ammunition he has used after a raid against the Mareth Line

On left—The picture reproduced here shows that Mareth, for all its seeming insignificance on the map, was nevertheless a place of some importance. The village after which the now-famous Line was named was a pivotal point for Rommel's Afrika Korps: consequently, it came under heavy attack from the air, as did the other points of enemy concentration. In the picture, a light bomber of the South African Air Force is coming in to bomb a large barracks housing the enemy in the village: in the right foreground, bombs dropped by a previous aircraft may be seen exploding on the same target. All about are other military objectives, especially on the road running towards the top of the view. Just beneath the bomber are wisps of cloud drifting across the target area.

The bombing of the immediate battle area was only a part of the work undertaken by the Allied Air Forces during the period which preceded the actual break-through at El Hamma and Mareth. Whilst light and heavy bombers were attacking close-at-hand objectives around the Mareth Line itself, other aircraft were, at the same time, attacking more distant targets. In fact, the scale of the assault by air was of a much greater intensity than that which preceded the offensive at El Alamein

THE BRITISH AND THE U.S. AIR FORCES FLY TOGETHER: As the big Flying Fortresses return from their raids by daylight over the Continent, the British Spitfire fighters fly out to meet them, to guard them against the German F.W. 190's intent on their destruction—*Drawing by Roland Davies*

The alliance between Great Britain and the U.S.A. is a very real one in the air these days, and the R.A.F. and U.S. Air Force are working in the closest co-operation in many bombing operations over the occupied territories and in Tunisia. The objectives of the big bombers may be Paris, or Antwerp, or some other industrial centre in the occupied countries. The Flying Fortresses, having done their work, are returning to their bases in this country, when the air becomes full of F.W. 190's or Me. 109's. The bomber squadrons are, say, some 50 miles from Paris; the enemy usually concentrate on one squadron. Things may become very hot indeed, when the R.A.F. squadrons detailed to watch for and protect the big bombers also flash out of the sky. On a recent occasion, one lone Fortress was seen to be flying several thousands of feet below the main squadrons. Spitfires dashed in, and soon broke up the enemy fighters into a series of dog-fights: but it was too late to save the lone bomber, which was last seen to be going down. The leader of one American squadron recently expressed the warmest appreciation of the timely aid of the R.A.F. "They flew so close," he said, "that it seemed as if one could put out one's hand and touch them!" As is now generally known, the Americans are doing most of their bombing work in daylight, thus making the air assault on the enemy a twenty-four hour per day business!

On left—**THE PLANE WHICH CAME HOME WITH NO PROPELLERS and with its front turret ripped away—a feat for which the Flight-Sergeant pilot has been awarded the Conspicuous Gallantry Medal**
—Drawing by Roland Davies

Flight-Sergeant George Ashplant, of No. 166 Squadron (a twenty-two-year-old Liverpool Civil Servant), was returning from Lorient when his machine collided with a Halifax bomber over Britain. The impact tore both engines of his plane from their bearers, ripped off the front turret and the underside of the nose, and carried away both propellers. The aircraft went out of control in a spin, but the pilot managed to regain mastery: by a fine display of airmanship, he made a crash landing with the remnants of his bomber. In preparing his drawing of the incident, our artist writes: "It is very probable that the pilot could not alter the position of his undercarriages, owing to the damage he had received. He would keep his wheels down, as they would take the shock of the impact—which would be all to the good, seeing that the plane was so severely damaged as to be out of control, otherwise than gliding swiftly down. Crash-landed German aircraft have been found within my own area with their wheels down—probably for the same reason." The Conspicuous Gallantry Medal awarded to the pilot is considered to rank next to the Victoria Cross

A DAMAGED AMERICAN PLANE FLIES HOME SAFELY: Her left wing and engine nacelle riddled with flak, this B-26 (or Martin Marauder, as it is known to the R.A.F.), belonging to the U.S. Army Air Force, flew home to a safe belly-landing after a bombing raid in Tunisia

LIFE in the ENGINE-ROOM DURING WARTIME

An Appreciation of the Work of the Engineers and Firemen Below the Water-line

Described by M. J. MASSEY

¶ *The largest proportion of a ship's crew serve down below under the direction of the Chief Engineer. But they* hear *certain sounds very vividly, although they cannot* see *the course of the action up above. Depth-charges and bomb explosions sound like huge hammers hitting the hull. . . . And they have to carry on, trusting to the men up on deck.*

YEARS ago, a ship's fireman (only the Navy has stokers) was any husky lad who could shovel his share of the 30 tons of coal the average tramp consumes each day. As counterpart of the old days, when sailing-ships put to sea with a crew of tailors and farmers, many a tramp has gone to sea with a dozen "makee-learn" firemen who soon acquired the ritual of slice-bar and shovel under the eye of some hard-bitten Ulster Scots "Chief."

Those days have very nearly, if not quite, gone. The growth of oil-fired boilers, the Diesel engine, mechanical stokers and the increasing complexity of modern boilers and engines is putting the accent more on brain than brawn. Now even women go to sea as engineers. One of them (a peer's granddaughter) actually

THE "BLACK GANG" IN THE "HELL'S KITCHEN" OF A MINESWEEPER. These men must have blind faith in the deck watch to keep a vigilant eye open for mines; for if the ship is hit, "Hell's Kitchen" will become an even warmer place!

A SCENE IN ONE OF THE STOKEHOLDS OF A COAL-FIRED MERCHANT SHIP IN CONVOY IN BAD WEATHER—*Drawing by Wm. McDowell*

Stoking, particularly when the ship is rolling in heavy seas, is arduous work, and much more skilful than is generally imagined. The boiler fires have to be kept burning clear, and every shovelful of coal has to be spread evenly—not only to keep a regular heat, but in order that not too much smoke from the funnel may betray the ship to a lurking submarine. In heavy weather, bursts of sea and spray come down through the skylight and ventilator shafts and turn to steam on the hot boilers: loose coal and water on the floor-plates make a precarious footing, and a sudden lurch of the ship may fling a stoker against the furnace fronts and either injure or burn him. Note, in the above drawing, the additional "Jacob's ladder," to provide means of emergency escape should the vessel be torpedoed and the stokehold suddenly flooded

***On right*—MEMBERS OF THE CREW OF A MINESWEEPER AT THEIR POSTS IN THE ENGINE-ROOM. Whilst it looks warm and cosy in this spot, it might be zero up on deck! The quarters here, naturally, are more cramped than in a bigger vessel such as that implied in the drawing on the next page**

took her second's certificate in 1924, and was recently decorated for devotion to duty while her ship was bombed in convoy. In fact, even in a coal-fired ship, the boiler- and engine-rooms are surprisingly quiet and orderly places. Twenty feet or more below the waterline, the outside world is remarkable remote, only the voice-pipes and the ship's telegraph link engineers, firemen, and oilers with bridge and deck. So remote is it that some owners now take a leaf out of the Navy's book, and fit loud-speakers down below, so that the "black-gang" can be given some inkling of what is going on above.

One sound, at least, they hear and feel even more clearly than those on deck, the thud of nearby depth-charges, bomb near misses, or possibly a torpedo exploding on a neighbour in convoy, which slam on the hull with the force of a giant sledge-hammer.

What the landsman refers to as "sailors"—the master, navigating officers, carpenters, and seamen, properly so called, are actually in the minority compared with those members of the ship's company under the direction of the chief engineer. A 9,000-ton 11-knot coal-fired tramp may have a total crew of forty-eight. This is made up of the master and his three navigating officers, popularly known as first, second and third mates; wireless operator and, say, nine seamen. The balance of the deck department will be made up of cooks and stewards, galley boy and cabin boy, bo'sun and carpenter.

But down below there will be the chief engineer and at least four assistant engineer officers, twelve firemen, three oilers, and an apprentice or two. At least twenty-two of the ship's company, then, work either in boiler- or engine-room, as against, say, sixteen on deck. Actual deck work, while at sea in modern vessels, is not particularly heavy, and when in port dock labour is called on for cargo handling, so the large number of deck-hands called for in sailing ship days is unnecessary.

So dependent is a modern vessel on her engines and boilers—even the boat davits may be power-operated—that it is particularly essential the firemen and engineers should stand by their posts in a damaged ship until a definite decision has been taken to abandon her. Steam for the pumps, steam for electric light and radio, steam for fire-fighting pumps and air compressors must be produced as long as there is a prospect of saving the ship. Loyally do the men below accept the risks of their calling, although quite properly the "chief" of a stricken vessel may decide to send on deck all his men except those who are needed for the immediate job below. Occasionally, of course, circumstances leave no choice—sometimes it is not so much a matter of men abandoning the ship, as the ship abandoning the men. Many an engineer or fireman has found himself in the water after a torpedo explosion with only a very hazy idea how he got there. The rush of water after an explosion frequently helps rather than hinders the men below to escape.

Coal-fired boilers are great absorbers of man-power, our 9,000-ton steamer may have more men below than a much bigger and faster oil-fired or motor-driven ship. A 10,000-ton 12-14-knot ship with oil firing can make do with six firemen, as against our coal-burner's twelve, though she will probably have three donkeymen, and seven engineer officers against the smaller ship's five. A Diesel-driven vessel may have a smaller crew still.

With vessels of normal design, one may take 10,000 tons and 12 knots as being the practical limits in size and speed for hand-fired coal-burning ships. It is quite possible to operate faster hand-fired ships—many of the old-time liners had a prodigious number of firemen. But above the speeds we have quoted, the oil-burner, the mechanical stoker, or the Diesel-engine pay the better dividends.

The war has not been an unmixed curse for the Merchant Navy. Over and above the question of pay and danger money, Service conditions are tending to improve. The crews' quarters in many of the vessels now being built show a marked and much-needed improvement. Changing and drying rooms are becoming more common, marine superintendents permit a larger supply of hot water (one has to go to sea to appreciate this.) Electric lighting is now permitted much more liberal use in officers' and crews' quarters. Before the war, a ship in port often stopped her dynamos after a certain hour, and oil lamps had to be used. But now electricity has to be used so much more—for degaussing, for example—that owners are becoming reconciled to a reasonable standard of comfort and light in the living quarters.

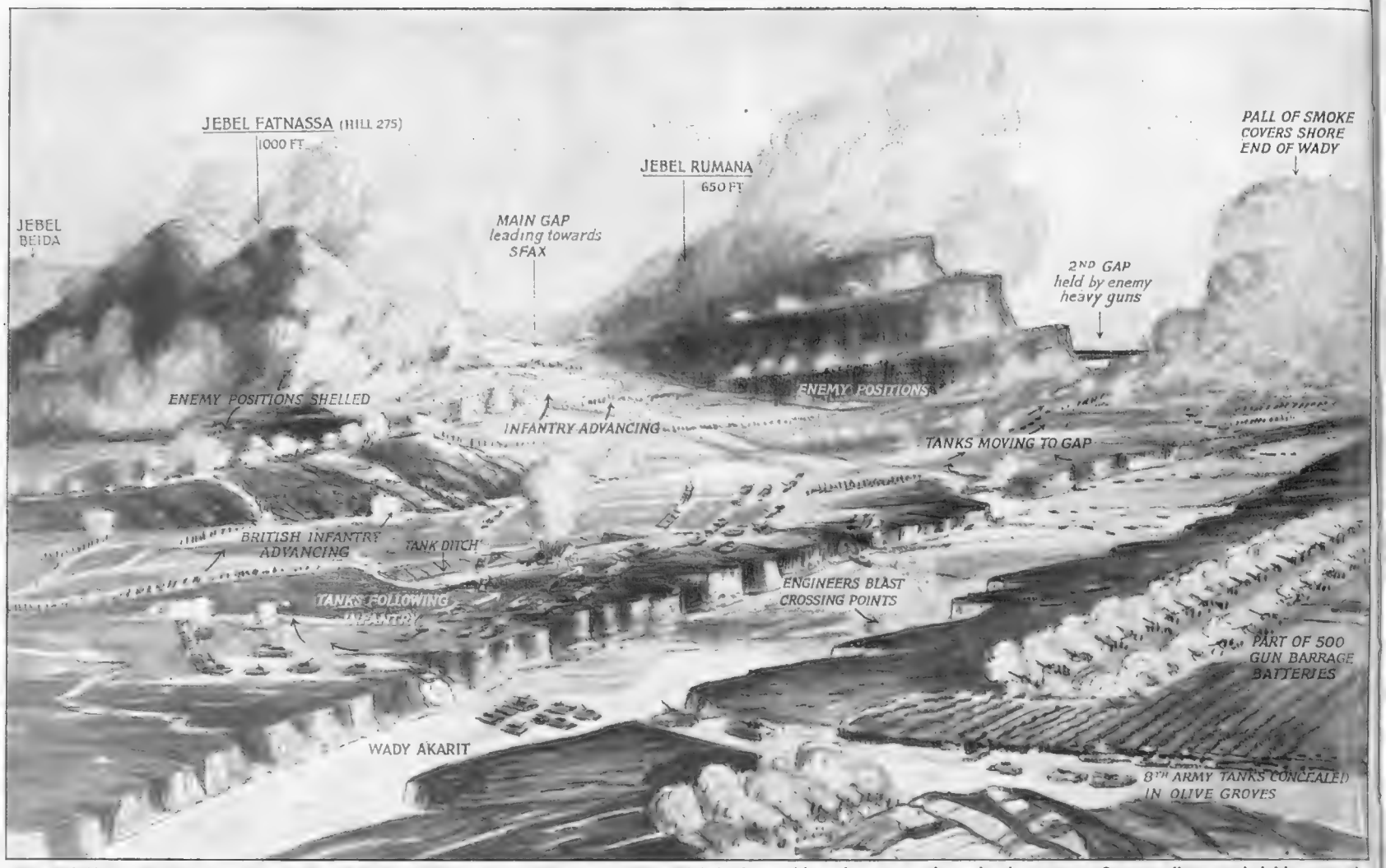
Much, in fact, is happening now to disprove the old saying that "the fool of the family goes to sea."

THE CENTRAL PLATFORM IN THE ENGINE-ROOM OF A LARGE MERCHANT SHIP IN CONVOY

—Drawing by Wm. McDowell

The vigilant engineers stand within easy reach of the controls, ready for any sudden order from the bridge for a change of speed. On the right, an officer is using the voice-pipe which communicates with the boiler-room; in the centre, another studies the log in which every alteration of speed is recorded. The floor-plates are "chequered" to afford as good a foothold as possible. Above is one of the grating "cat-walks" which give ready access to other parts of the vast engine spaces

***Below*—TENSE EXPRESSIONS IN THE ENGINE-ROOM OF AN OIL TANKER as she crosses the Atlantic on her way to a British port with a cargo of precious oil**



THE DRAMATIC SETTING OF THE WADI AKARIT BATTLE, where 500 guns of the Eighth Army blasted a way through the strong German lines and laid open the town of Sfax for our occupation. Two jebels, or peaks, smoking like volcanoes as the Eighth Army plastered the hillside with gunfire, dominated the scene. In the foreground is the Wadi Akarit, which runs from the Salt Marshes to the sea : it is represented here being crossed by the advancing British tanks, which forced a way through both the main and the secondary gaps as they came up behind the infantry—*Drawing by Percy Home* (See notes at left)

The Campaign in Tunisia

The CAPTURE of the WADI AKARIT POSITIONS

And Scenes from the Central and Northern Tunisian Battlefronts—*Special Sphere Drawings*

When General Montgomery again unleashed the Eighth Army against Rommel's Afrika Korps, it was against a position which the enemy had taken up after the break-through at Mareth and El Hamma. This new position had many defensive features, which formed a strong barrier to the Axis-held port of Sfax. The wide Wadi Akarit here runs from the Salt Marsh, or Shott Fedjad, down to the sea between Gabes and Sfax. (The Shott Fedjad itself is, in fact, the eastern arm of the much larger Shott Djerid which has figured so largely in despatches concerning the El Hamma advance.) Behind the Wadi Akarit, and commanding it, rise two dramatic jebels, or hills—the Jebel Fatnassa and the Jebel Rumana.

These latter rise out of the plain in a gentle slope to the west. The Jebel Rumana reaches to a height of 650 ft. and then falls in three huge steps ; across a narrow, but deep, gap is the Jebel Fatnassa, or Hill 275, which is continued to the westward by the Jebel Beida, whose jagged crest is lost in the distant mists. Rumana and Fatnassa (the latter is the higher) form one block, which is severed by a gash running from south-west to north-east. That gash is the defile through which the battle for the Wadi Akarit was fought.

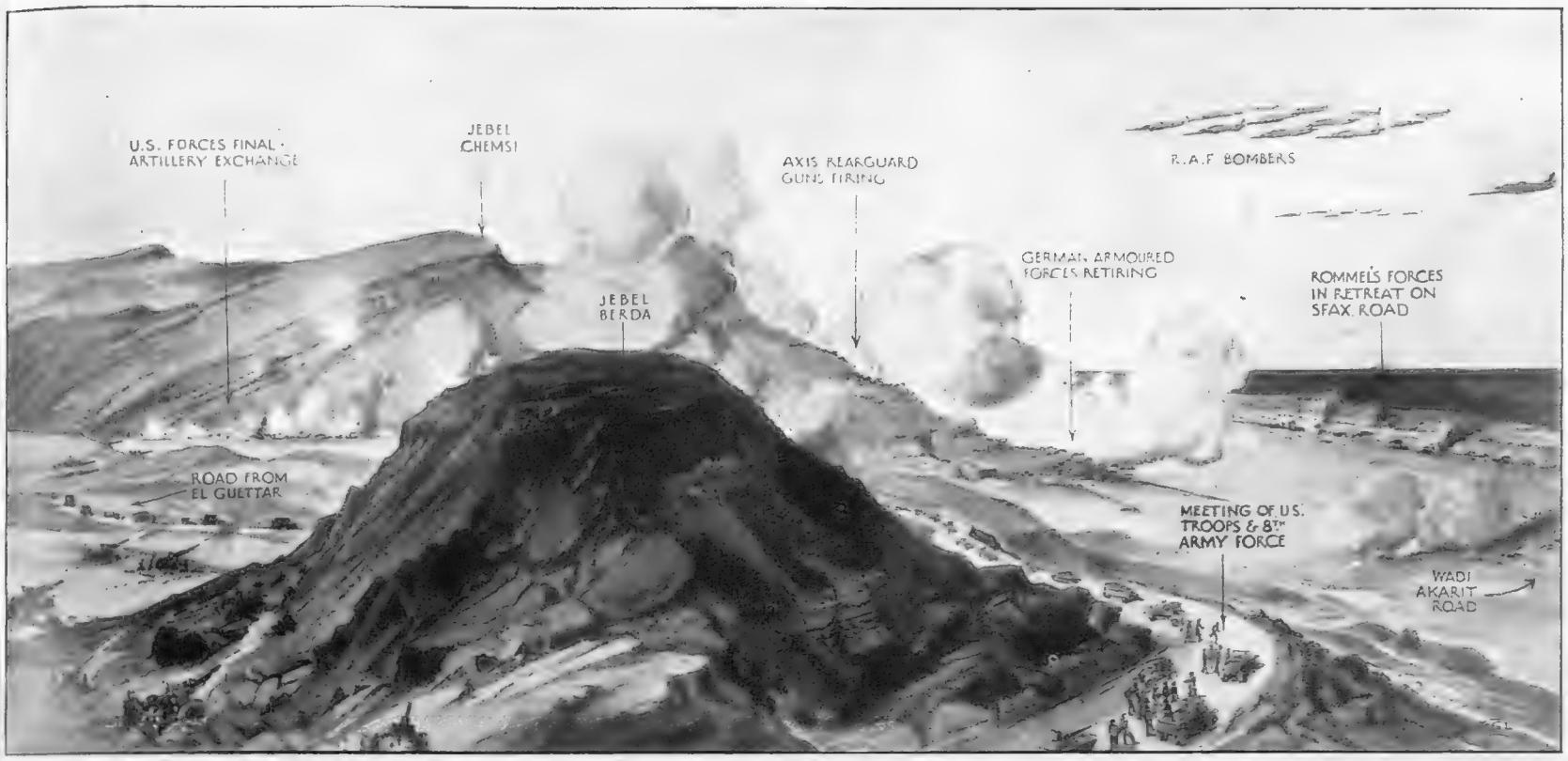
The Eighth Army had now formed up its main and flanking forces into one body again : it now moved northwards, leaving El Hamma to the rear as an important point of supply and reinforcement. For the attack on the Wadi, infantry and tanks had been moved forward into concealed positions in gullies and olive groves ; and the 500 guns which Montgomery had now assembled for the great assault had been similarly advanced to their proper positions.

It was at 4 o'clock in the darkness of early morning on April 6 that the assault began with an artillery barrage, "the most fearful since El Alamein." There was no moon, the scene being lit only by the flashes from the encircling guns and the bursts of shells on the two hills and their foothills occupied by the enemy. As the darkness lightened, the battle increased in intensity, and when morning came the whole plain was choked with the grey smoke from the shells. In the distance the brown hill of Rumana appeared distorted into fantastic shapes as our shells exploded round it. Hill 275—or Fatnassa—was wreathed in smoke and dust, and the highest peak—about 1,000 ft. high—seemed to be erupting like a volcano.

By this time, British infantry were already nearing the summit of both hills. High up from them came sharp flashes, while the bitter wind carried the sound of machine-guns and mortars over the valley. As the sky lightened, our tanks dashed forward to exploit the gap between the hills across the route prepared by our infantry They rumbled over the hill, crossed the valley under shellfire, and then began to fan out.

After daybreak, the barrage was switched from the foothills to the mouth of the Wadi Akarit, where our forces were laying a smoke-screen. Here the German guns answered furiously till the whole short section was shrouded in a thick white smoke. The barrage was then turned back on to Rumana, the heights of which were still held by the enemy. Soon a pale rocket signalled its capture.

THE NEW AMERICAN "TANK DESTROYERS" GOING INTO ACTION IN CENTRAL TUNISIA : This is a first picture of these powerful anti-tank weapons. They are armed with 3-in. guns, as well as other weapons ; and they are, as this picture indicates, heavily armoured and manned by a strong crew. The heavy 3-in. gun and its turret is in the rear. Some of these vehicles (known to the U.S. Army as the M.10) are being produced by the Ford Works



HOW THE U.S. SECOND ARMY AND THE BRITISH EIGHTH ARMY EFFECTED A JUNCTION: This historic meeting took place on the road between El Guettar and Gabes on April 7, after the Germans had been driven out of their positions along the Wadi Akarit—*Drawing by E. G. Lambert*

The actual first contact of the U.S. Second Army with the famous Eighth Army took place immediately after victory had been secured at the Wadi Akarit. First contact between these long-separated forces took place on the El Guettar-Gabes road, in the shadow, as our correspondent describes it, of the Jebel Chemsi, the scene of intensive fighting during recent days. It was the Second American Army which slowly, but steadily, fought their way eastward to greet the first car of the patrol sent out by General Montgomery.

As the two cars approached binoculars were brought out, neither side being quite sure of the identity of the other. But soon mutual advances were made. It was an historic moment. So much had been heard of the famous Eighth Army, and so much eagerness had been displayed, that words were difficult to find when the actual moment came.

Soon the guns ceased on both sides and the road was clear. The Americans had had no light task. The Germans had fought tenaciously on the hill slopes, foot by foot, and had heavily mined the areas in front of them, so that any advance of the Americans was costly. But the American force was daily becoming more accustomed to heavy bombardment and to the tactical use of tanks in and out of smoke-screens. As one American correspondent put it, "the average American soldier has learned a great deal in the last few weeks. His concealment and camouflage are better; he digs more speedily and more thoroughly after taking fresh positions; he is losing the beginner's awe of dive-bombing and machine-gunning." He is steadily becoming battle-seasoned in the most compelling of all fields—the battlefield itself.

ON THE NORTHERNMOST SECTOR OF THE TUNISIAN BATTLEFIELD: The capture of "Bowler Hat Hill" by the First Army. This point, whose proper name is the Jebel Dahara, is 400 ft. high. It was stormed by the British troops in old-time style after a race up the hillside—*Drawing by W. G. Whitaker*

When the men of the First Army recaptured "Bowler Hat Hill" (after having previously been forced away from this position) it is believed that none of the German holding force escaped. Eleven unwounded prisoners were taken: the remainder of the defenders, all German, were either killed or wounded. British casualties in this old-style storming operation were a mere handful. Our men, after surrounding the hill, launched their onslaught in bright moonlight, after a whole day of intense artillery preparation. The final attack was made under cover of protective machine-gun fire. It took about two hours to carry the height. When the British raced up the hillside they found the Germans well entrenched, and there was some sharp fighting at close quarters. The capture of Jebel Dahara—"Bowler Hat" to the troops because of its shape—means that we, instead of the enemy, held a valuable point of vantage dominating an important road junction. Our men soon established themselves in holes blasted into the flat, smooth surface of the hill by British sappers, who accompanied the attacking force when they stormed the height

THE BATTLE FOR THE EL HAMMA "GAP" WHICH COVERED THE APPROACHES TO THE VILLAGE BETWEEN TWO HIGH RIDGES OF HILLS. The Germans flung every available reinforcement into the village, setting up a host of guns, including sixteen 88-mm. weapons taken from the El Hamma landing-ground, among the vast grove of palm trees stretching from the Salt Lakes. As British guns and tanks came up the slopes outside the village at mid-day on March 28, a violent and fantastic gun battle developed in a choking sandstorm—*Drawing by E. Byatt*

After the success of the British outflanking movement towards the strongly held village of El Hamma, furious fighting took place in the "Gap" which covered the approach to the village. The action here has been described by a British tank General as one of the most brilliant ever carried out by the Eighth Army and one which has made tank history. The British guns and vehicles arrived outside the village at mid-day: to receive them the Germans had flung in everything they possessed. But in the ensuing duel the enemy was decisively and completely beaten after furious fighting, and when they fled they left behind on the sandy plains the greatest assortment of guns, wrecked vehicles, supply dumps and Italian prisoners since the Alamein break-through. It is obvious that the Germans were caught on the wrong foot by Montgomery's sweep round the Matmata Hills. Prisoners said that two things about the attack came as complete surprises: first, the attack was launched at four o'clock in the afternoon—long before it was expected; and, second, the Germans were caught right off their guard by the British night attack with tanks (illustrated on the right). In their retreat the Germans blew up the Causeway across the eastern tip of the Salt Lakes, but left the El Hamma landing-ground intact without even trying to mine it or blow it up. After the decisive defeat on Sunday, March 28, the Eighth Army entered into possession of El Hamma on the 29th

AFTER THE CAPTURE OF THE EL HAMMA POSITIONS: Led by a Bren-gun carrier, 2,000 Italian prisoners march back through our lines. This group were holding positions outside the village and, as usual, they were left behind by the Germans as the latter pulled out and made off to the north

***On right*—THE NIGHT ATTACK BY BRITISH TANKS AT EL HAMMA. The vehicles went in single file through fitful moonshine as they by-passed the entire German 21st Panzer Division (seen through the haze on the right) and then attacked them later**
—*Drawing by E. Byatt*

As night came, a famous British tank division, moving forward through the difficult wadi area, overtook the action of the infantry and gunners. The tanks advanced in single file with the commanders riding with their heads out of the turrets. This is the first time tanks have been sent into battle at night in such numbers, and the Germans were taken completely by surprise! Under a pale moon, shrouded mostly by flying cloud, the British tanks passed through the entire German 21st Panzer Division. Most of the time, as they went forward through the night, the only thing the tank crews could see was the fluttering pennant of the Squadron Commander: "It seemed to float in the dust, rising and falling as the tank lurched over rough ground," said a British captain who took part in the triumphant advance

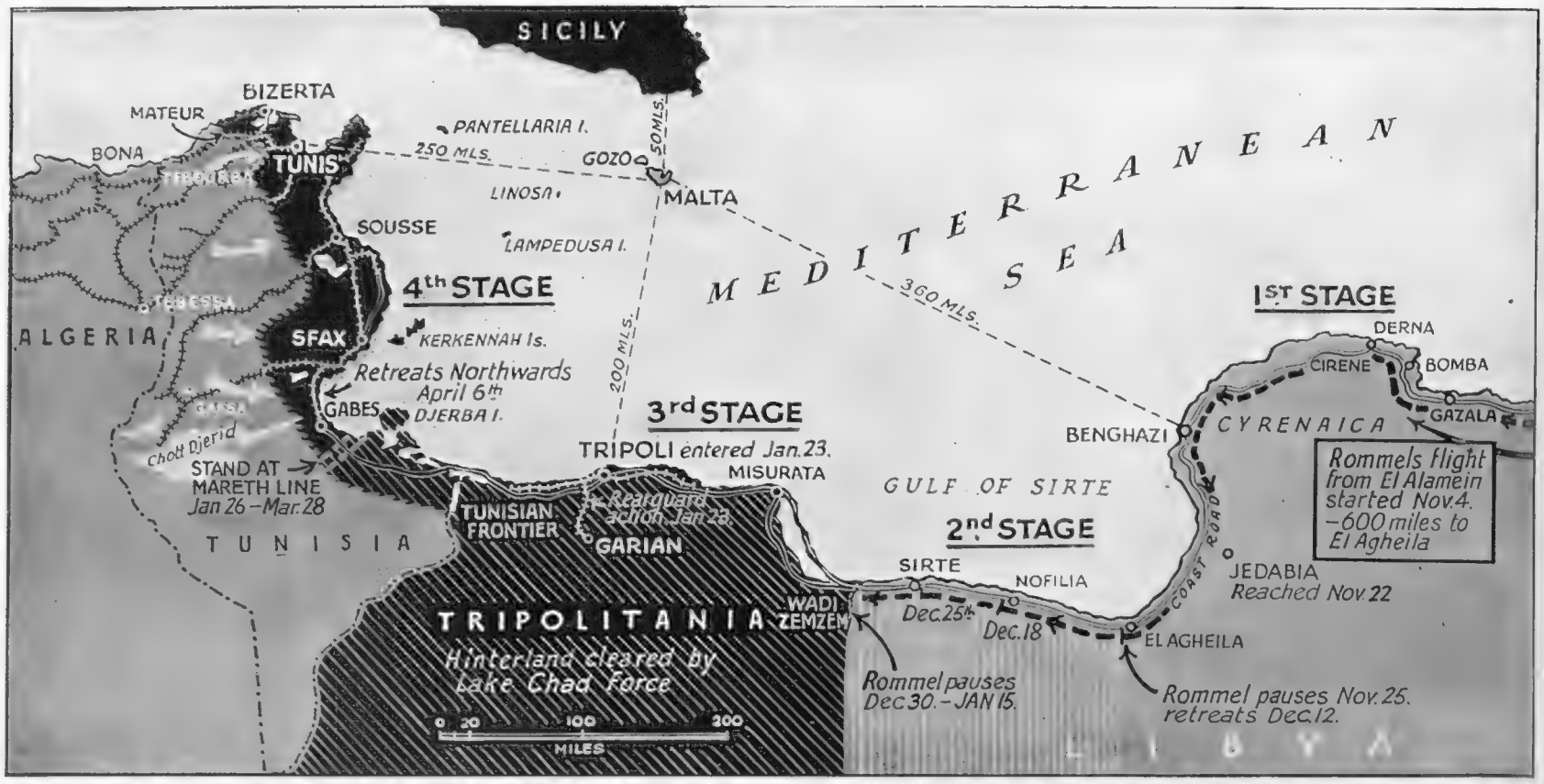
The Campaign in Tunisia

HOW the BATTLE of EL HAMMA WAS FOUGHT

The Artillery Assault on the Village, and the Advance of the British Tanks

ON THE MORNING OF MARCH 29, after the heavy artillery bombardment (which lasted through the night), the enemy were forced to evacuate El Hamma. Natives watched with interest as the first Eighth Army vehicles passed through in pursuit of the fleeing Germans

A SIGN AT EL HAMMA, just outside the town: It reads, in German, "Watering place." Crusader tanks are going past it as they push on hard on the heels of the retreating enemy



THE FOUR PRINCIPAL STAGES IN ROMMEL'S RETREAT FROM EL ALAMEIN TO TUNISIA, the greatest retreat in military history. The first stage, from Alamein to Agheila, put the whole of Cyrenaica back in our hands. The second phase took the Eighth Army up to the Wadi Zemzem, and completed the capture of the whole Libyan province: then came the occupation of Tripolitania, and the advance to the Tunisian frontier and the Mareth Line. The fourth and last stage in Rommel's great retreat is now being witnessed in Tunisia itself—*A Special* Sphere *Diagram-Map*

The Campaign in Tunisia

ROMMEL'S RETREAT from Egypt to Tunisia

—Its Four Stages Described: Together with an Analysis of THE MILITARY POSITION during his TUNISIAN RETREAT, *shown in Three Special Diagrams*

NOW that it is possible to see the Afrika Korps great retreat in its proper perspective, we can realise that it falls into four stages.

The first period lay between El Alamein and El Agheila, starting on November 4 last year, when Rommel realised that he had lost the battle and must retreat with all speed to save the remnants of his army. General Montgomery had hoped to put the Axis forces "in the bag," but phenomenal rain held up the pursuit, giving the enemy the chance to escape into Libya just ahead of the Eighth Army. Never able to pause anywhere, he evacuated Tobruk, Derna, and Benghazi in quick succession, picking up the garrison troops and hastening towards his goal—the defensive position of El Agheila, to which he had retreated in December, 1941.

For three weeks Rommel paused at El Agheila, where he was seen improving the already strong natural defences. Montgomery arrived on November 25, waited for his heavy armour and supplies to arrive, and then struck on December 12.

The second stage of the retreat lay between El Agheila and the Wadi Zemzem, where the next pause was made. Rommel rushed his army back along the coast road of the Gulf of Sirte, through Nofilia (occupied on December 18) and Sirte (occupied on December 25), and took up a position on the Wadi Zemzem, one of three wide rifts with very steep sides which cut across the road leading to Misurata. Again Montgomery had to make preparations for a major attack. This time the pause lasted seventeen days; when all was ready, on January 15, Rommel had repeated his vanishing trick and was again on the move, without risking more than a rearguard action. But he had now left the last of the natural defensive obstacles, and it was then realised that he was aiming for the frontier of Tunisia. Bad weather, and the thousands of mines scattered profusely by the enemy, made the pursuit far from easy; but in spite of these difficulties the Eighth Army clung to the heels of the retreating enemy.

The third stage was between the Wadi Zemzem and the Mareth Line in Tunisia, where Rommel's harassed army had another pause. Montgomery broke his army into two columns, one following the coast road, the other an inland road among the spurs of the hilly country of the Jebel Nefusa. Misurata was taken on January 19 and Homs the following day, by the coastal force, while inland Tarhuna was occupied on the 20th.

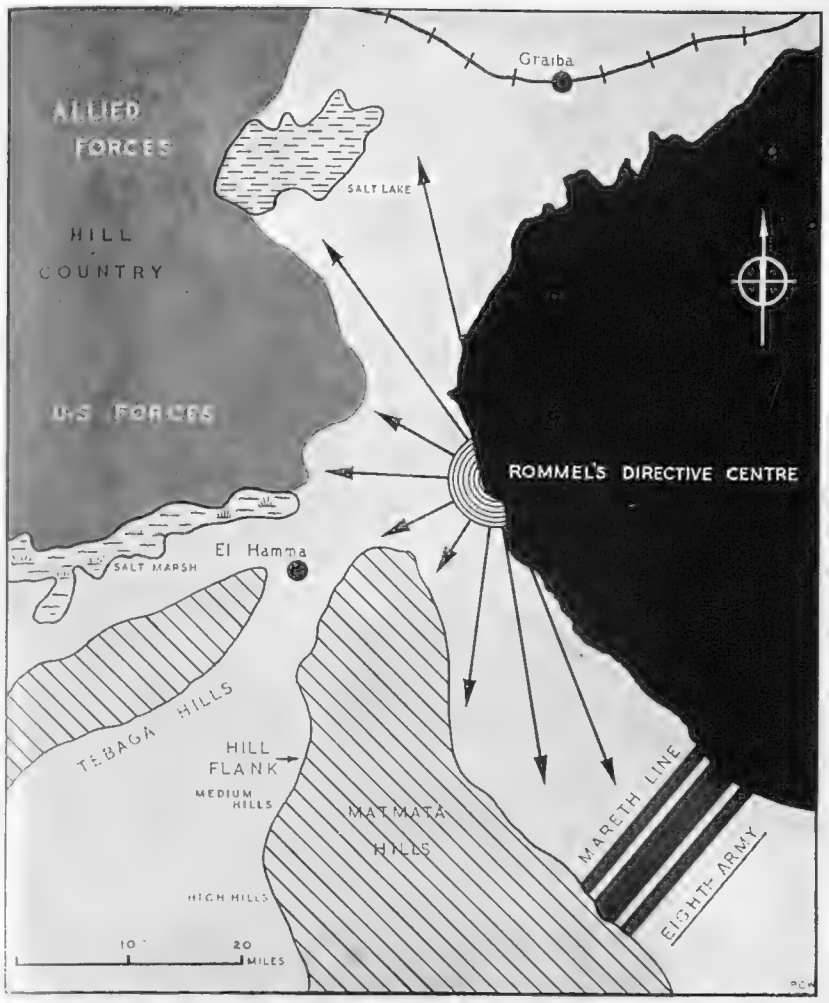
The speed of the Eighth Army seems to have surprised Rommel, who was hurrying westward, leaving only some "suicide" squads of machine-gunners and snipers to obstruct the pursuit. Tripoli was left open and was entered on January 23. By January 26 Rommel had reached the Mareth Line (200 miles from Tripoli), where he was protected by the formidable defences erected by the French, and by the prolongation into the Matmata Hills.

For nearly two months Rommel remained at Mareth, from January 26 till March 28, much aided by the persistence of bad weather, which turned the marsh land into deep lakes, difficult to traverse. He made one great effort to strike at the Eighth Army (on March 5) before it could attack him in force, but was repulsed with great loss. On March 20 Montgomery made a frontal attack on the Mareth Line, having to cross the Wadi Zigzaou, a defensive ravine in front of the lines. When this frontal attack proved too expensive, Montgomery threw most of his force into the flanking movement across the desert to El Hamma. Furious fighting took place on March 27 and 28 in which the Germans were forced back, convincing Rommel that the Mareth Line was no longer secure from the rear.

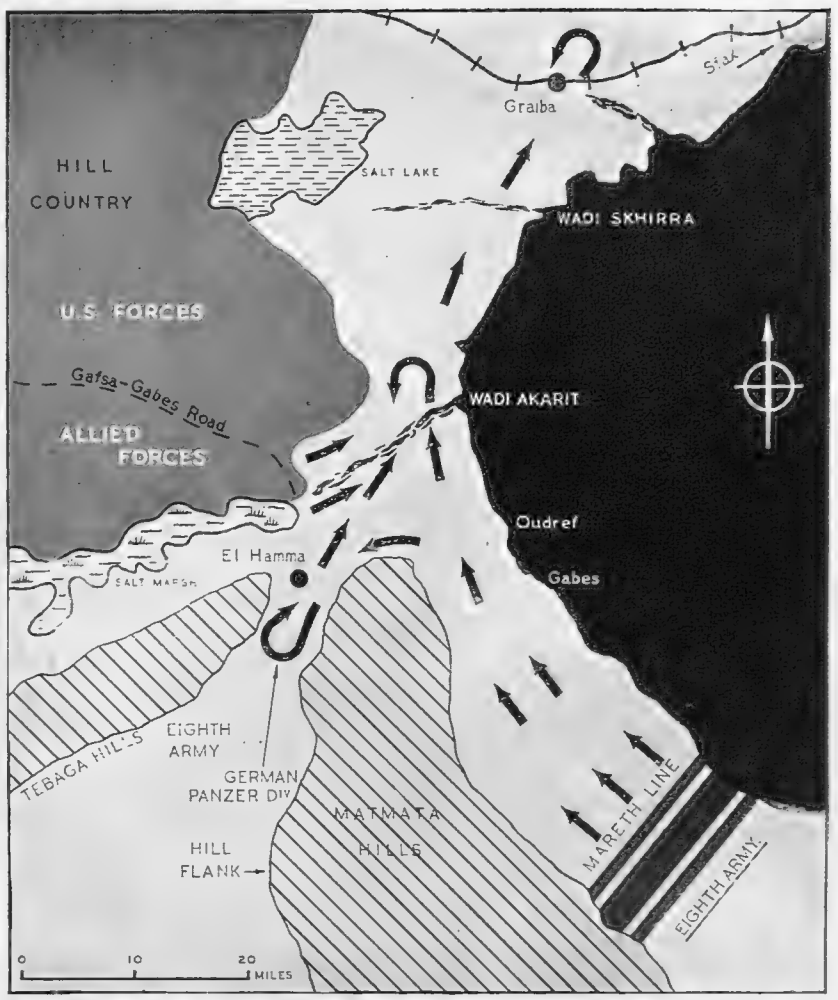
The fourth stage of the retreat was in full operation in the opening days of April. Rommel withdrew from Mareth, passing through Gabes and Oudref without fighting; to the Wadi Akarit, just three miles beyond Oudref. Here the road narrows between the sea and the wadi, which is connected with the Shott Fejej, the last natural obstacle on the way to Tunis. On the 6th Rommel was attacked and forced out of the wadi positions He had, however, succeeded in holding his army together, though suffering heavy losses in men and material; but never had he been able to stand against the onslaught of the Eighth Army since El Alamein.

ROMMEL'S FAVOURITE DEVICE TO DELAY THE EIGHTH ARMY, and how it was countered—*Drawing by W. G. Whitaker*

At every stage of the retreat through Cyrenaica, Libya, Tripolitania and Tunisia, the Afrika Korps sowed big minefields to check the British advance. But without avail, as the Sappers soon learnt how to deal quickly and effectively with the mines. The first thing was to mark a path through the minefields: this was done with white strips; as soon as the path had been cleared, the infantry could at once go forward to follow up the retreating enemy. So that the paths would be visible at night, too, shaded lamps were placed in position for lorries and infantry, as shown in the drawing above



1. ROMMEL'S DEFENCE PROBLEM IN THE MARETH AREA. His land flank was protected by the Matmata Hills which he held by a system of gun emplacements, many of which guarded the terrain below. Further north he had to guard the passes leading from the Tunisian hills, where his best Panzer units were placed to stop the American advance



2. OUTFLANKED AT EL HAMMA AND HIS ARMOUR FORCED BACK, Rommel was now in a difficult position at the Mareth Line. He had to retreat to another line of natural strength to avoid encirclement in dangerous country. This line was the Wadi Akarit and its two curiously shaped Jebels —which, however, soon fell to the Eighth Army

ROMMEL'S MILITARY PROBLEMS DURING HIS RETREAT

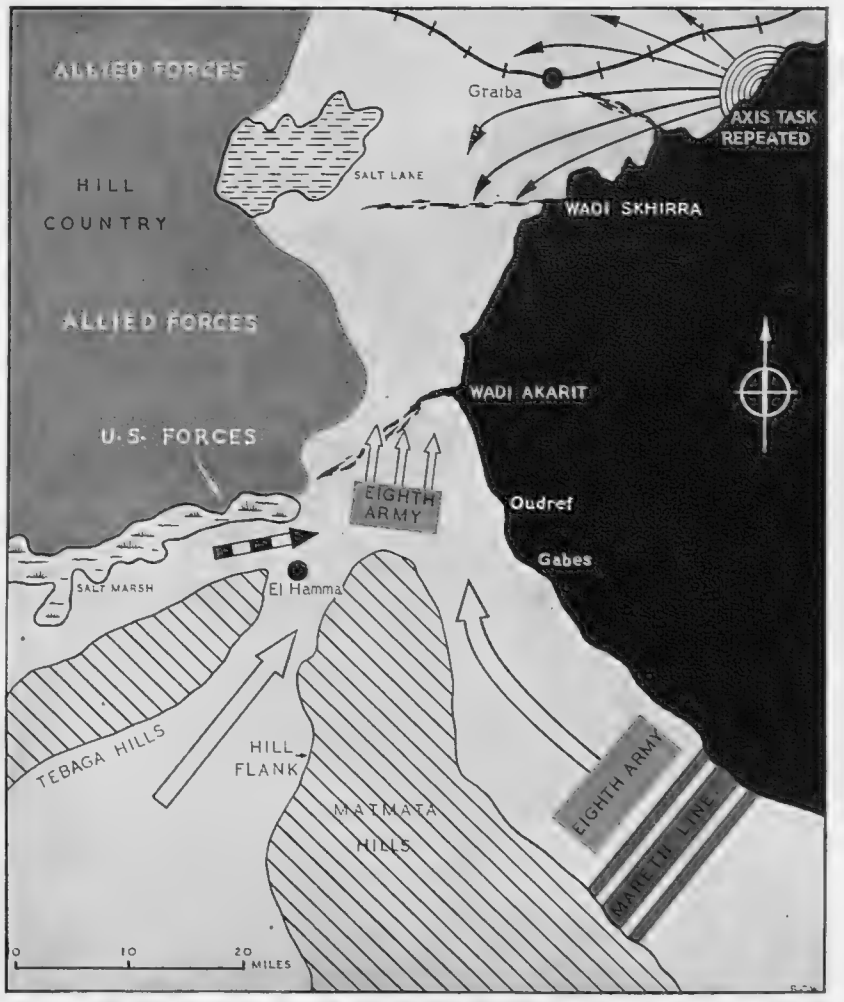
ROMMEL was faced with a very interesting military problem while he was holding the Mareth position. It was at once strong in tactical detail and weak from the variety of postern doors which had to be guarded in his parados areas. For a time he held a pivotal control from a point south of Gabes, which enabled him to swing forces in any of the directions indicated by the arrows in diagram 1. He could, and did, strike far up into the mountains towards Thala as a counter-offensive which drew Allied forces into this district to check a too-daring thrust. How daring it was is demonstrated when we realise that Rommel left only an Italian garrison to hold the Mareth Line during the Kasserine adventure. By the time, however, that Montgomery was ready to assault the southern enemy front, German troops were again strengthening the Mareth concrete positions. Rommel's own attack southwards failed, and he was unable to strike into the sand desert and cut the Eighth Army's flanking movement owing to the presence of the hill barrier, at once his protection and his undoing. The Mareth Line had to be abandoned without a second shot!

The boasted depth of defence at the Gabes-Wadi Akarit area seemed at first sight to be a hard problem for Montgomery to solve. The Allies were once again facing a defensive line upon the improvement of which much intensive work had been carried out. The hills on the Gafsa road frontage were stiff with prepared gun positions which made the task of the U.S. force a very hard one indeed. But against Rommel was the now massed Eighth Army, going strong with the strength of a multitude of battle veterans.

Once again Rommel had a surprise thrust upon him. His enemy had always struck in moonlight. This time the alarm sounded in the dead of a dark night—a testimonial to the skill of the Eighth Army that they could time all their movements accurately in silence and in darkness. Once again, Rommel had to retreat, his line again outflanked. Seizing any available loot at Gabes—and doubtless at other points—he moved northwards, holding off any interference with his land flank with desperate effort.

The massed strength of the Eighth Army having pressed Rommel up the rail and road—how far he was using the railways to get supplies remains to be seen—he once again found himself faced with the problem of a shore base in or around Sfax; but in this case his defensive fingers were dangerously stretched out. Mezzouna and the Faid Pass had to be warded off at increasing distances from the tempting shore railway. The Sousse-Kairouan area had better defensive features. Four marsh lakes might be linked in here, but once this position was lost, there was nothing but the Enfidaville-Zaghouan line left to the tired legions.

THE RETURN OF THE BEDUINS TO THEIR DESERT LANDS. As the Axis forces were driven farther out of Libya, the various native tribes gradually made their way back to the places where they formerly lived. This view was taken at a village near Daba, where once again the big desert tents were erected

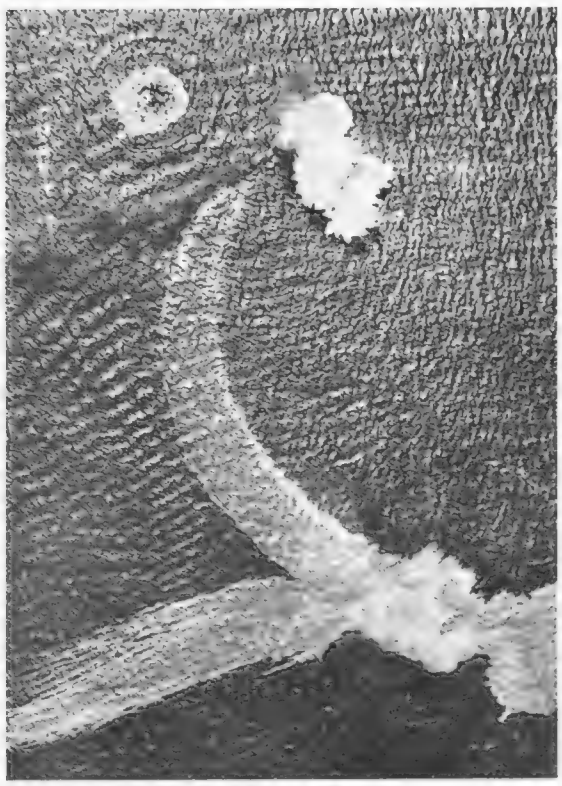


3. WITH THE ADVANCE OF THE POWERFUL EIGHTH ARMY, which was now able to draw its forces together, Rommel was soon thrust out of the Wadi Akarit area in the direction of Sfax. He was permitted only defensive action throughout, his offensive powers being now definitely checked

—Diagrams by B. C. Wood

BOMBING THE JAPS IN THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC

Some Striking Pictures of the War by Air against Japanese Naval Vessels and Supply Ships



THE DEATH OF A JAP WARSHIP: Twisting and turning in futile desperation and trailing tell-tale oil slicks in her wake, the destroyer is hit squarely on the bow by a bomb. It sank later

SINCE her decisive defeats in Papua and Guadalcanar, Japan appears to be taking up a defensive position in the Southern Pacific. Her original design in acquiring the islands lying around Australia was to cut off support reaching the continent from the United States. It was for this reason that she landed in New Guinea and the Solomons this time last year. After a long, bitter and deadly struggle she has at last been driven from Papua and Guadalcanar, and now that it is no longer so easy to acquire further islands, Japan is busy in ensuring the security of the possessions she already holds.

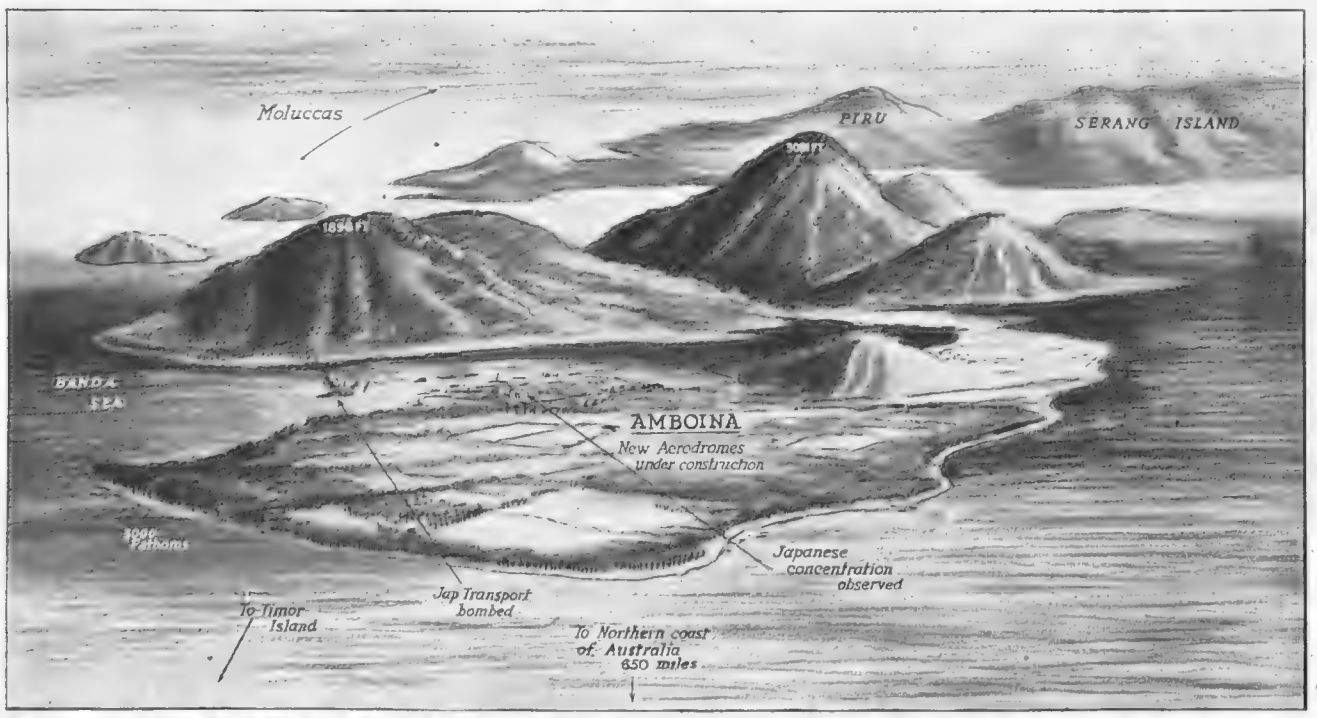
Having undertaken nothing less than the complete domination of the whole Pacific, Japan was loath to give up any ground she had taken, however apparently unimportant the island. She was ready to sacrifice many warships, transports, merchant ships and planes to keep her position, but in spite of her unyielding tenacity she has been forced to relinquish her hold at two points, and now she has turned to defence. Air reconnaissance has shown great activity in the arc of islands within range of Australia, from Timor to the Solomons, where more airfields are being constructed, slipways made and harbours enlarged. Large reinforcements of troops have arrived, and there is no doubt that the Japanese forces are busily engaged on their skilful entrenched defences, with concealed dug-outs which have proved so difficult to overcome.

The threat to Australia still remains, but the position is vastly different from that of a year ago. Then it was anticipated that the enemy would inevitably succeed in landing in the north, and it was planned to hold what was called the Brisbane Line, running west from Brisbane, giving up Queensland and the Northern Territory. To-day the Allied forces in Australia have been greatly increased. Only last week the fine, battle-seasoned warriors of the A.E.F., who fought so splendidly in Libya, Tobruk and Egypt, have returned to their own country to add their strength to the home forces. The American and Australian Air Force has grown in knowledge, experience and size, and has been augmented by squadrons of British Spitfires, who surprised the enemy when he tried to raid Darwin early this month. Their arrival had been kept secret, much to the subsequent dismay of the Japanese bombers, who lost six out of fifteen.

The tremendous disaster suffered at the Bismarck Sea, when the whole convoy, warships and transports, was destroyed, has caused the enemy to avoid Lae and try to reach New Guinea from the northern route, increasing the importance of Wewak and Madang. Small towns and harbours in Dutch New Guinea are also being increasingly used by Japan, and their little-known names are now appearing in the reports of Allied air raids.

THE CLOSEST EVER TO A JAPANESE DESTROYER! This picture was taken during the Battle of the Bismarck Sea as an Allied plane swept in low for an attack. What followed next is shown in the picture in the upper left of this page. The destroyer, along with the rest of the twenty-two-ship convoy, was blasted to the bottom of the sea by General MacArthur's land-based bombers

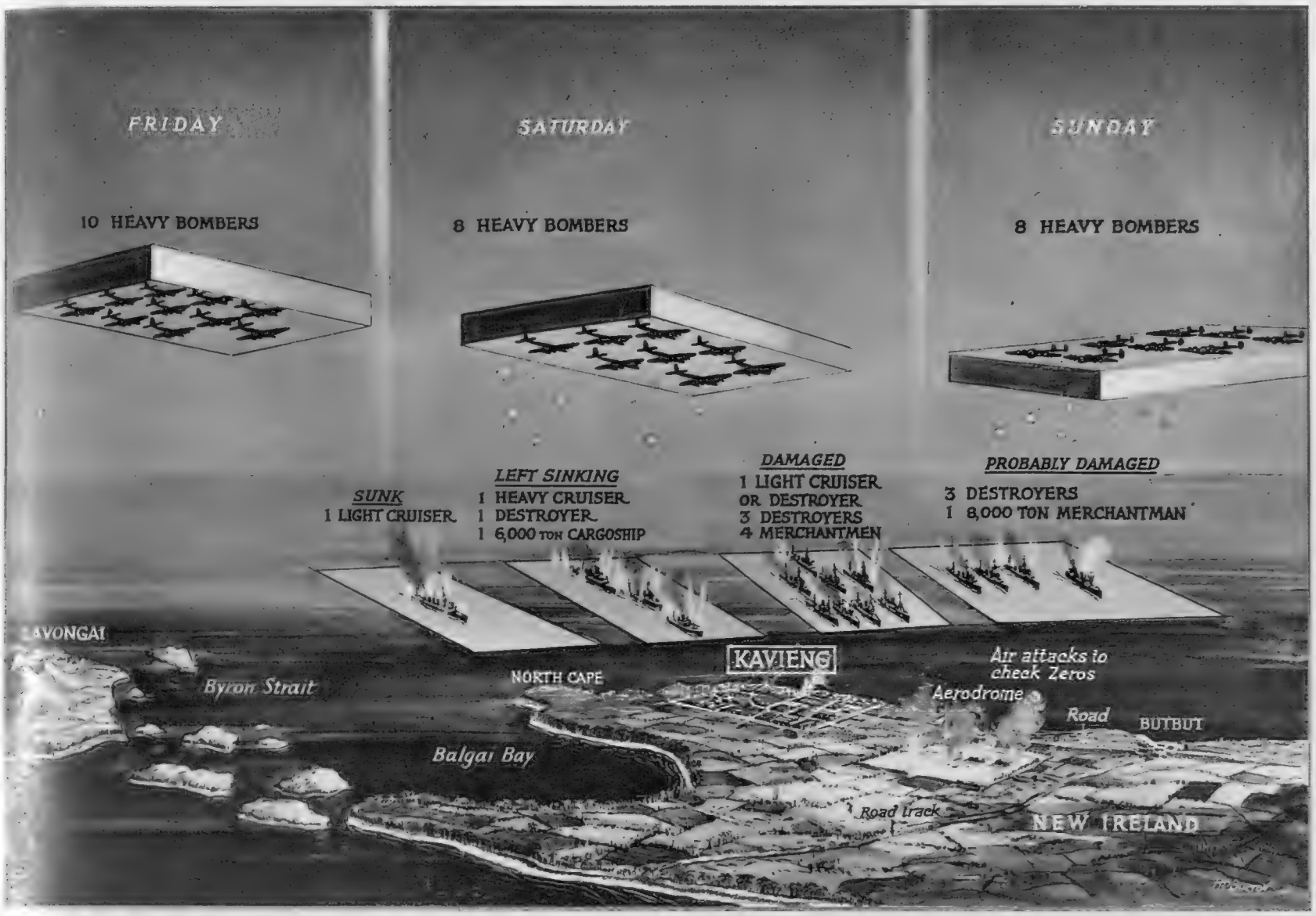
WHERE THE BATTLE OF THE BISMARCK SEA ENDED. A view from an American plane of the New Guinea coast near the port of Finschafen. The bomber versus ship Battle of the Bismarck Sea came to a finish here, with every one of the twenty-two Jap warships and transports of the convoy sent to the bottom. Twelve transports and ten warships in all were sunk and 15,000 men wiped out



IS THIS TO BE THE NEW STRIKING POINT AGAINST NORTH AUSTRALIA AND NEW GUINEA? The island of Amboina, in the Moluccas, where Jap concentrations have been observed since the enemy's abandonment of Guadalcanar, and where Jap transports have been bombed by Australian and U.S. airmen—*Drawing by Percy Home*

On left—

As the result of heavy air attack in the more southerly areas of Papua and the Solomons, Japan began to shift her concentrations to other regions further to the west and north in the Southern Pacific. During March and April it became evident that the Banda Sea was becoming full of enemy activity. Vessels were observed to be concentrating in the harbours provided by the string of islands forming the southern side of Pitt Passage. Amboina was observed to be particularly busy. This lies to the western end of Serang, a much larger island. There has been activity all round the western end of New Guinea, particularly round the promontory known as Eagles Head, or Vogel Kop. Jap ships have also crept down through the Arafura Sea to Merauke, and also down in a south-westerly direction to Timor, where Koepang seems to attract them. All these positions, as it were, lap round the Port Darwin promontory of North Australia



A SECOND BIG VICTORY SCORED BY GENERAL MACARTHUR'S BOMBERS AGAINST THE JAPANESE FLEET. The three surprise attacks carried out against a Jap concentration at Kavieng, in New Ireland, when seven warships and five freighters were sunk or badly damaged from the air—*Drawing by H. P. Burton*

...wing the loss of the twenty-two ships bound for Finschafen, in New Guinea, ...he opening days of March, news came in the early part of April of the ...ruction of a second Japanese convoy, with its naval escort—this time in a new ...le area at the northern end of New Ireland. Groups of Flying Fortresses ... assembled at points which involved a round flight of some 1,100 miles. ... attacks on the Jap fleet in the waters around Kavieng were timed so that ... heavy bombers could fly through the night and arrive off the island just ...e dawn. This evidently surprised the enemy. The first attack began on ... 2 with ten bombers; the second on April 3 with eight bombers; and the ..., with another eight bombers, on April 4. One light cruiser was sunk, one ...y cruiser and a destroyer were left sinking, a light cruiser was damaged, ...ther with three destroyers, and three other destroyers were probably ...ged. Two big merchantmen and four smaller ships were also badly mauled

BOMBS CRASH AROUND A JAP TRANSPORT during the Battle of the Bismarck Sea, March 2-4. Thirteen bomb-splashes are visible around the large vessel: two were near misses and caused damage. The ship was still under way when this picture was taken, but appeared to be on fire

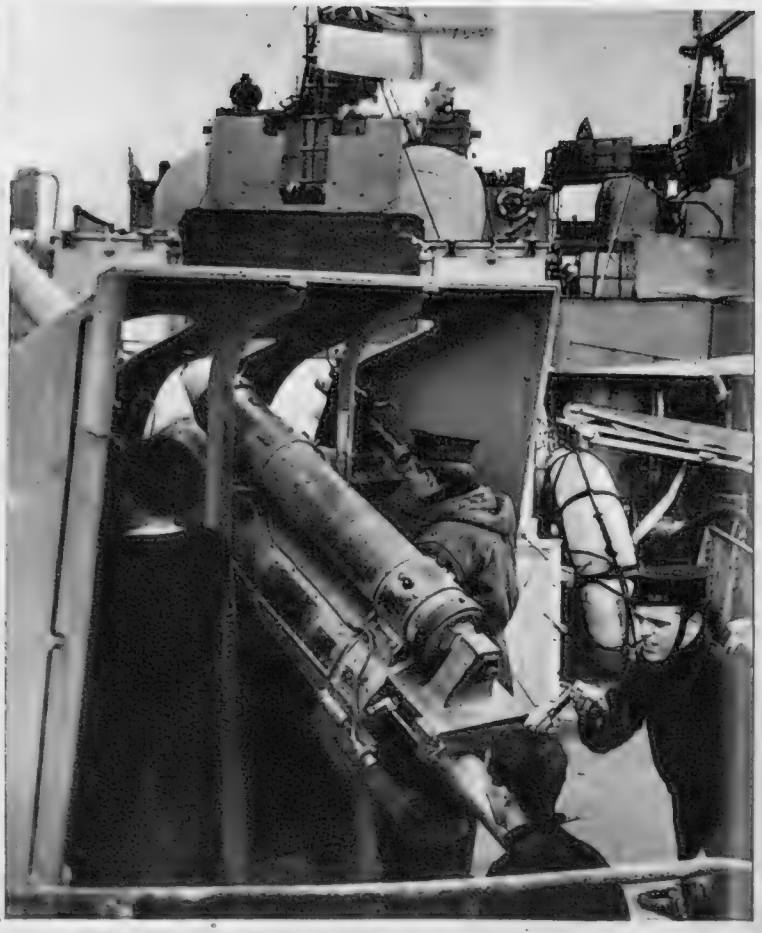
BOMBERS ATTACK AT MAST HEIGHT: Two medium aircraft are roaring in for a low-level attack. Another Japanese ship can be seen burning on the horizon. Shortly afterwards the bombers were able to report that the whole convoy of merchantmen and escort vessels had been completely wiped out

ANOTHER OF THE TWENTY-TWO VESSELS IN THE BISMARCK SEA which never reached its destination at Finschafen—a picture made by a cameraman in a Beaufighter flown by the Royal Australian Air Force during the ship versus plane battle

NEW TYPE WARSHIPS TO FIGHT THE ATLANTIC U-BOATS

THE ROYAL NAVY'S NEW ANTI-SUBMARINE "FRIGATES." The iced-up superstructure of H.M.S. "Kale" during convoy duty in wintry weather in the North Atlantic

The "frigate" is the new-type escort vessel whose existence in the Navy was announced only recently. They are similar to the well-known corvette, but larger and faster ships; and they are better able to withstand the heavy weather through which the convoys have to battle in the North Atlantic. Details of the armament of the "frigates" are still secret, but they are known to carry depth-charges and mine-sweeping gear in addition to their deck guns. Those now at sea—H.M.S. *Kale* amongst them—have already proved their worth against the U-boats



SOME OF THE CREW AT WORK ON H.M.S. "KALE": A view which indicates the quantity and the compactness of the equipment on the new "frigates"

THIS IS THE FIRST "FULL-LENGTH" PICTURE OF THE U.S. NAVY'S NEWEST VESSEL IN ACTION. Called a "destroyer escort," it is specially designed to protect Allied convoys against enemy submarines and aircraft. The DE's (as the class is officially known) are faster than a destroyer, but not as large. Last week we published an artist's impression of this type of vessel: here is the actuality, which shows the "destroyer escort" to be bristling with guns. Note the absence of portholes along her side, and the curious corrugated effect of the vessel's plating: the high bridge superstructure appears to be very massive

ONE OF THE NEW AMERICAN AIRCRAFT-CARRIERS GOES TO WORK. This is the U.S.S. "Sangamon," steaming steadily ahead with her load of planes: she is now doing escort work, and also ferrying military aircraft to the scenes of battle. Smaller than the ordinary run of aircraft-carriers, these new-type vessels can be converted from merchantmen in less than half the time required to build the "combat" type: they are, in fact, being turned out at a "production-line" rate. The bridge superstructure, pushed to one side, has been erected right forward of the upper flight deck

H.M.S. "SUSSEX," OF THE COUNTY CLASS CRUISERS, RACING OUT INTO THE ATLANTIC TO KILL AN ENEMY TANKER which had been spotted by our reconnaissance aircraft. After steaming for 200 miles the vessel was intercepted 500 miles off Cape Finisterre and was sunk by salvoes from the cruiser—*Drawing by Montague Dawson*

HE CRUISERS OF THE COUNTY CLASS

Which have Greatly Distinguished Themselves Throughout the Present War

—Two Special Drawings

ough known to the reference books under other class- names, to the general public the *Sussex* and *Norfolk* are n as cruisers of the County class. There are the *Dorsetshire*, , *Devonshire*, *London*, *Shropshire*, *Sussex*, *Cumberland*, , *Kent*, *Cornwall* and *Berwick*—all with very much the ilhouette, and with three funnels as the most conspicuous of each. The arrangement of four guns forward and ft is a characteristic of all of them : there are pairs of guns h turret, and all are 8-in. They carry two slender-pole with the exception of the *Suffolk*, which has slender

e first six vessels mentioned above were designed by Sir m Berry, and the remaining five by Sir Tennyson d'Eyncourt. Although on paper these ships seem to be inferior to foreign "Treaty" cruisers, in practice they are superior in seagoing qualities and have accommodation and habitability which are not equalled by any other vessels of a similar type. In addition, a considerable amount of weight has been expended in structural strength and internal protection. No attempt has been made to attain the high speeds which have been recorded by the Tourville and Trente types, yet over 34 knots has been maintained in service without in any way pressing the boilers. Many of these cruisers were reconstructed during the years 1935-38.

In some of the vessels, an improved ammunition supply gives a rate of fire of four rounds per gun per minute under Director control. An 8-in. broadside weighs 2,048 lb. (nearly a ton) ; the total cost of the armament alone is £700,000 ; the cost of a single broadside £408.

In the picture reproduced above of the *Sussex* steaming out into the Atlantic at top speed, we show the moment after an enemy tanker had been located at sea by a British aircraft. The ship, which was evidently attempting to run the blockade, was fully laden. H.M.S. *Sussex* steered to intercept her. When she was sighted, the cruiser opened fire at a range of 9 miles. Soon the enemy was ablaze from stem to stern, and her crew abandoned ship. She continued to blaze until in the evening she finally sank.

The lower picture shows another County class cruiser, H.M.S. *Norfolk* : this vessel has now adopted the snow bunting as its unofficial mascot. British seamen to-day are not so superstitious as their ancestors, but to several hundred sailors who have spent the last two years in the *Norfolk*, the snow bunting will always be a good omen. This superstition is not ill-founded. It is based upon a series of coincidences which made the snow bunting's visit to the ship seem lucky. The first time this little bird appeared on board was during the chase of the *Bismarck*, when the *Norfolk* was in the forefront of the pursuit. No importance was attached to the incident until, some months later, contact was again made with a suspected enemy ship. At that exact moment another snow bunting circled round the ship and landed on the guard rail. This one also stayed two days, taking up quarters in the Commander's cabin. Then it flew away through an open port. After that the bird's visits became almost regular, and always just before possible danger. The third occasion was an hour or two before the cruiser escaped a heavy bombing without damage, and the fourth was while she was standing by to intercept the *Tirpitz*, then believed to be at sea

ANOTHER CRUISER OF THE COUNTY CLASS : H.M.S. "NORFOLK," which took part in the chase of the "Bismarck." This is the vessel which claims that the snow bunting (a small song-bird from Northern Europe and Siberia) is her self-appointed mascot—*Drawing by Montague Dawson*

THIS IS THE ROUTE WHICH THE GERMAN CONVOYS THROUGH THE CHANNEL MUST FOLLOW, well over towards the Continental side. It is along this route that our coastal craft and bombers make their most successful forays as the enemy vessels creep to and fro

TERSCHELLING ISLAND, OFF THE DUTCH COAST, IS A MOST IMPORTANT POINT along the route. All enemy ships east- or westbound must pass here: frequently our bombing aircraft are able to score successes on shipping in the waters hereabouts

THE AXIS SHIPPING ROUTE THROUGH THE CHANNEL

Which the Germans Must Use Owing to Their Inadequate Railway System on the Continent, Despite Their Heavy Losses at the Hands of Our Coastal Craft and Bombers

By MARTIN CHISHOLM

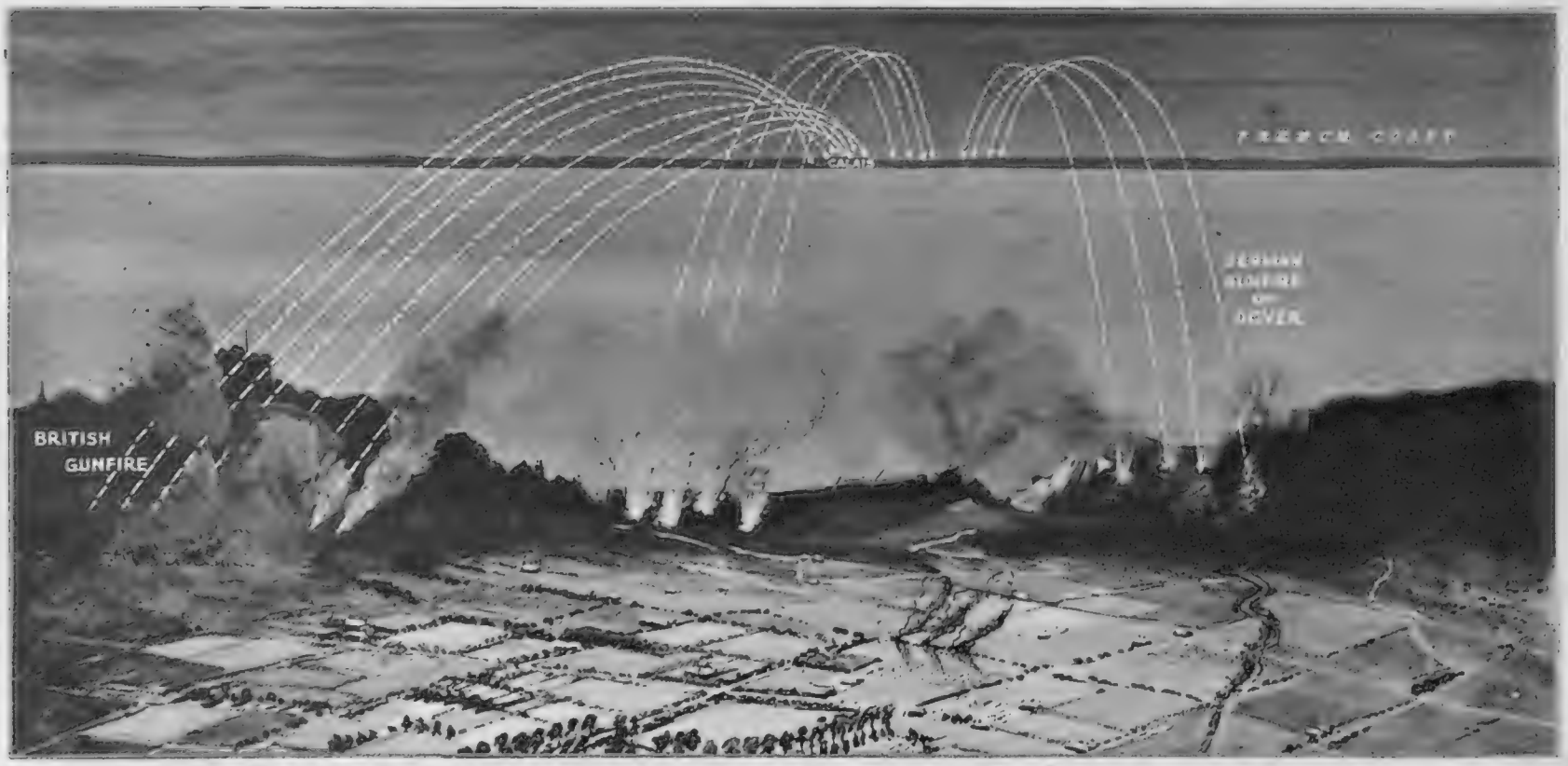
One of the most striking features about sea traffic in these narrow waters is that while British convoys are moving with the greatest freedom along our own South and East Coast, enemy shipping, particularly along the stretch between Brest and Terschelling, in the Frisian Islands, is only able to move by fits and starts, and is subjected practically the whole time to danger from our Light Coastal Forces, bombing planes and mines laid in its path by our surface and air crafts.

Movement of enemy sea traffic along the coasts of France, Belgium and Holland is, in fact, largely restricted to the carrying of oil and other war supplies essential to the German military machine.

From Brest to Terschelling is a distance of roughly 600 miles, and nowhere throughout the whole of his course does the master of an enemy merchantman pass at a distance of more than 100 miles from some point on the English coast until he reaches the neighbourhood of Rotterdam, unless he makes a wide deviation and hugs the coast of northern Brittany until he is forced to turn northwards along the shore of the Cherbourg peninsula. The German shipmaster knows that he is all the time within range of British bombers. The knowledge that radiolocation, too, can be used to detect his presence will hardly ease his mind. Anywhere in the English Channel he is liable as well to sudden attack by British and Allied Motor Torpedo Boats. If, suspecting trouble ahead, he should decide to put in to some port on the northern coast-line of France, he is still liable to bombing. In the narrows of the Dover Straits, he knows that he may be subjected to shell-fire from our heavy coastal batteries. The same constant danger of surface and air attack persists as he works north-eastwards along the coast-line of Belgium and Holland.

¶ *Although the German shipmaster knows of his special dangers on this "nip-and-run" route, he also knows that a 5,000-ton freighter can carry cargo to and from Western Europe which would otherwise occupy 400 railway wagons!*

THE British blockade of the "narrow seas" between the coast of South and South-East England and the European shore-line is providing an increasing worry to those responsible for solving German transport problems and is placing a growing strain on the nerves of German merchant seamen.

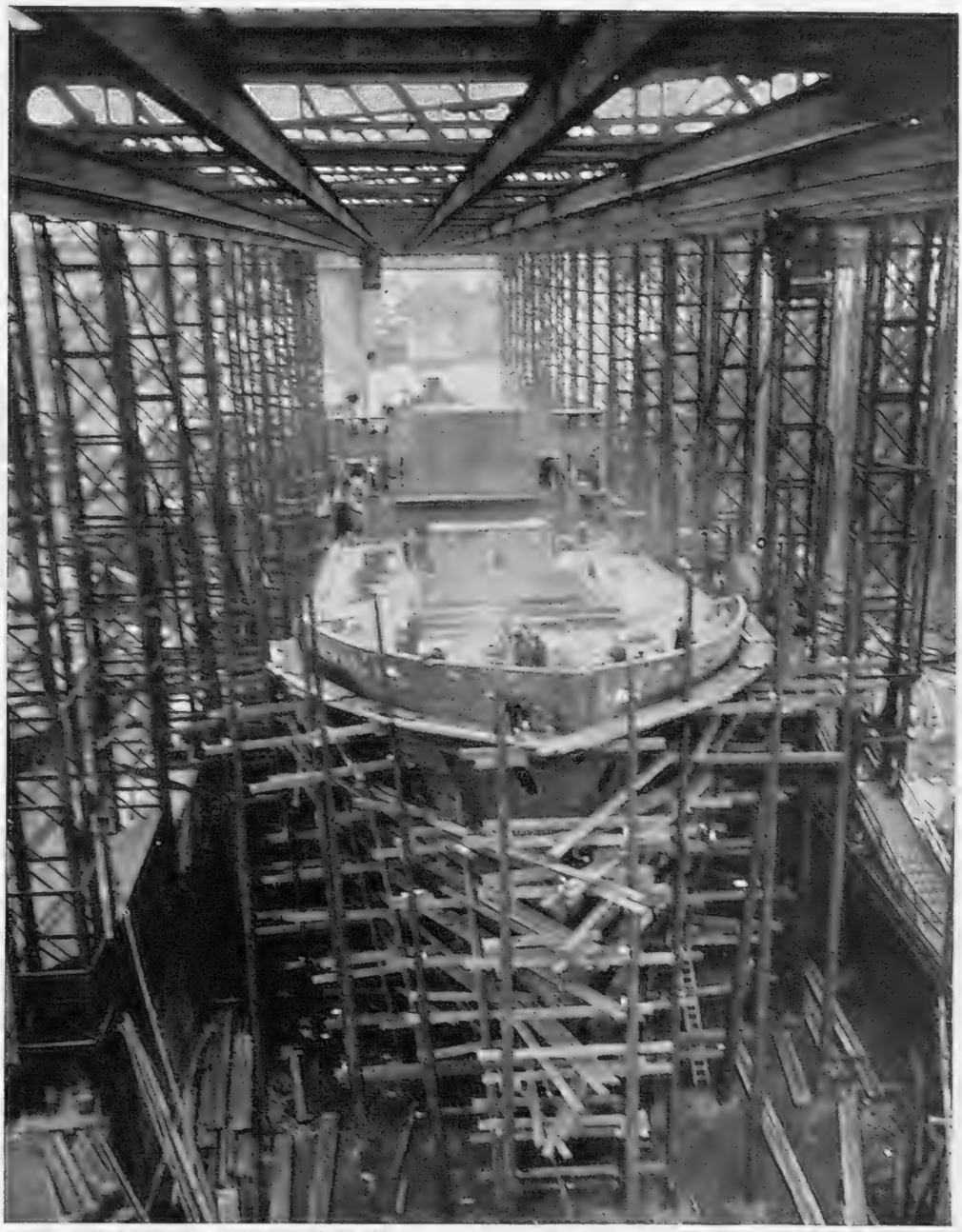


THE DUEL OF THE BIG GUNS ACROSS THE CHANNEL. An outburst of long-range shelling usually indicates that Axis, or British, shipping is attempting to pass through the Straits of Dover: these attempts are usually made by night, although—so desperate is the enemy's transport position—efforts have sometimes been made in full daylight. Recently, statements have been made that the German guns are so powerful that they are capable of shelling the London suburbs. This, however, may well be just another of Dr. Goebbels's stories designed primarily for home consumption!

Work in British Shipyards

WOMENS ARE NOW DOING VITAL WORK on the maintenance and repair of British submarines. When the famous submarine *Ursula* arrived home recently after one of her cruises, the crew were very surprised to see women in dungarees go aboard. They were a working party to help in the repair and maintenance of the vessel—the first women to undertake this job. Above, two of them are seen working on the submarine's exhaust valves

A derrick of a nearly-completed ship is tested. Fifty tons of old anchor chain are hoisted to ascertain its lifting power and strength



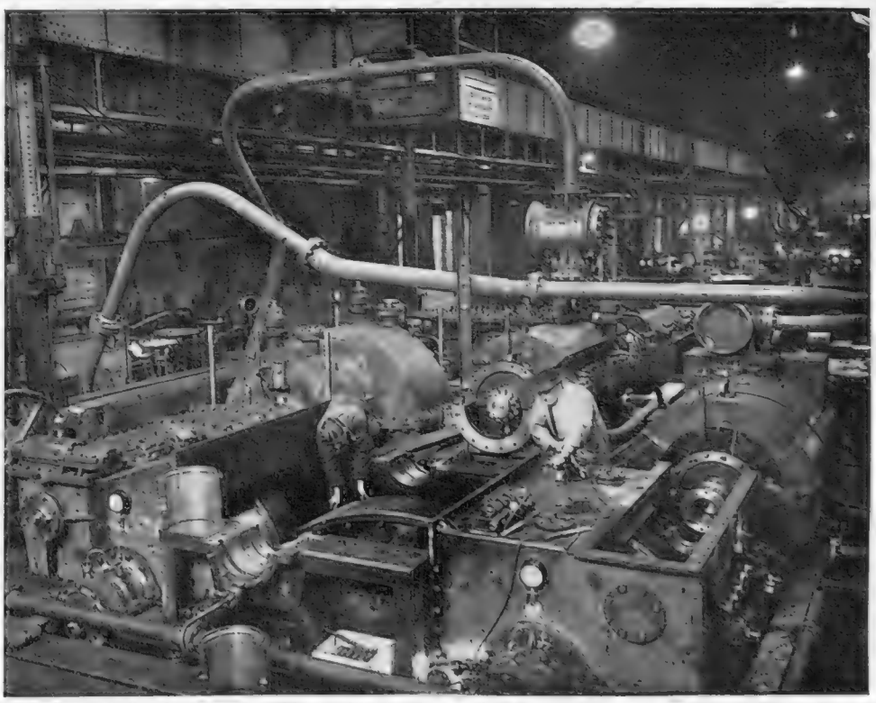
BUILDING OUR NEW CARGO-SHIPS: A 10,000-ton merchantman ready for launching. To combat the ever-present U-boat peril and to make up our losses in the Battle of the Atlantic, the shipyards of this country are hard at work building cargo-ships, and the naval depots are equally busy turning out new warships day and night. In the words of Lord Leathers, Minister of War Transport, our policy is to build as quickly as possible fast vessels to carry the maximum amount of cargo with the greatest measure of safety. Many women are now being employed in most of the British shipyards, and are performing their different tasks with skill and speed

"The area off Terschelling" has appeared frequently in Admiralty communiqués announcing successes by our Light Coastal Forces. The reason why this area is one of our particularly favourite hunting-grounds is that Terschelling Island forms a focal point near which coastwise traffic must change course to the eastward if bound for north-west German ports.

The day and night offensive which we are carrying out against German coastal shipping is only one part of a twofold blow aimed at his communications. The other part is the rain of blows which the R.A.F. keeps up on railway communications on shore. The result of an air attack on a factory or submarine building-yard may not be felt until some months later, but the effect of every successful attack on the enemy's railway system is immediate. War supplies vitally needed for German factories or German armies are held up. The most important of them must then be urgently diverted and sent by sea. Perhaps essential materials are loaded into a 5,000-ton freighter. That freighter will carry as much as could be packed into 400 railway wagons, which would need the equivalent of 10 engines to haul them. One well-placed torpedo can end that freighter's sea life in a few moments, sending to the bottom 10 train-loads of essential goods.

Night and thick weather provide the cover which it is essential for the German shipping to use if it hopes to escape detection, but night navigation along the low-lying coast of Belgium and Holland, beset with off-shore sandbanks, is by no means easy, particularly if, as is highly probable, shore-lights and lighted navigation buoys have been reduced to a minimum. The main inshore channels are well known to British sailors and airmen and no doubt receive periodical visits from our mine-laying aircraft.

Another point of concern to the German seaman is that Germany's resources in escort craft are now heavily stretched. She has not, in fact, enough destroyers to screen her fleet, protect her coast and provide essential escort for her coastal convoys. These are, therefore, largely being protected by a smaller type of vessel, a composite mine-sweeper and escort craft.



As well as hulls, intricate machinery has to be made for the new cargo-ships. This picture shows some of the engines which will later be installed below deck in one of the new 10,000-ton cargo-vessels

LIFE WITHOUT WAR . . .

Impressions During a Short Stay in the Heart of the Country, Where the War is Very Remote. Described by CHARLES GRAVES

Somewhere in Great Britain

ONE does not need to be the agricultural correspondent of a national newspaper to realise how far advanced the whole country is—owing to the abnormal spring. Mr. Hudson's energetic campaign for putting as much of the country under crops as possible has been so successful in this part of the world that farmers are complaining that there are not enough pasture lands for their sheep. Nevertheless, the lambing season has been one of the most prolific on record, and I have seen magnolia trees in full bloom out of doors, and the camellias already budding.

Against this pastoral background the Home Guard carry out lengthy exercises, and the green berets of an isolated detachment of Commandos provide further colour. Incidentally, I was watching some of these men on parade while their commanding officer adjusted their head-dress. It appears that the regimental badge should be worn immediately over the left eye and that the leather band must be worn horizontally across the forehead. As men of the Commandos come from different regiments, it is not so easy for this head-dressing to look uniform.

As is well known, men in the Commandos find their own private billets. The idea, presumably, is to maintain their individualism. There are, however, two drawbacks. One is that if they go off on a raid, presumably more people than would normally be the case know that they have gone. The other point is that they only receive civilian rations, and a hungry man in the Commandos can easily eat a kind-hearted landlady out of house and home. At the moment, of course, the glut of eggs solves the immediate problem.

Incidentally, it is time someone invented a noun for men of the Commandos. It is as ridiculous to call a man a Commando as it is to call him a platoon. Why not Commandier, on the lines of Brigadier?

London, seen from this distance, is very remote. Not a bomb has dropped in this area since the outbreak of war (which is one reason, of course, why the black-out is very casual). One sees two or three aircraft a day, but they are always ours; and there is an anti-tank range not so far away: whereby hangs a tale. One of the residents complained bitterly in my hearing that the guns are occasionally fired at ten o'clock in the evening because it upsets her Cairn. She added that, in any event, the guns never hit their target. This was grossly untrue, because I had inspected them at a few yards' range and they were positively riddled. But it shows what a complete absence from the blitz and direct contact with the war can do.

Occasionally the war does obtrude itself even here. A married woman whose husband has been officially reported killed at Singapore nine months ago was intending to get married again at the end of this week. Yesterday a letter reached her from her husband, showing her that he was a prisoner of war.

Officers of all three Services come down here for brief spells of leave, but few of them talk shop to the natives. One of them, a Wing Commander with the D.F.C., threw an interesting light on the subject of books written about the Royal Air Force by Royal Air Force pilots. He seemed to take a dim view of this, unless the author had actually been a writer in peacetime, like Richard Hillary. "Look at the Navy," he said. "They are a first-class Service and they never talk or write about themselves. But just look at our chaps." He agreed with me that *War Birds*, written in the last war by an anonymous member of No. 85 Squadron, is the best book ever written about the Royal Air Force. (I cannot understand why it has not been reprinted in this war. There is a fortune in it for some publisher.) Apropos *War Birds*, where so many of the pilots were obviously suffering acutely from flying stress, he said that he was not at all sure that the operational rest that pilots now get after a "tour of duty" is a good thing, because they are so inclined to think about what might have happened to them if they had been unlucky, and often dread the inevitable return to operational flying.

Which brings me to a note I received this week from a girl who was present when the Royal Air Force Regiment took over from the Foot Guards at Buckingham Palace. This is what she says:

"I witnessed in camera a few minutes of historical importance. A Corporal Guardsman giving last-minute words of advice to the new and nervous Corporal, R.A.F. Regiment.

"If anyone wants to know what is the stuff that is best in the British, let them hear the kindly superiority of that Guardsman: 'It 'll come—it 'll come,' he was saying. 'You don't have to worry, chum. You 're right, see? You want to look as if you 're right. You make it three paces, and three paces it is. Three big paces. And make it look as if them paces was what you been waiting to do all morning. You 'll be right, chum. I 'm not worrying about you. But make them big paces. And then on the full turn fake it a bit or you 'll find yourself zigzagging to get through the arch centre, see? It 'll come—it 'll come. Only don't ferget to look as if you 're right. And you 're right till the officer says you 're wrong. Then you 're wrong—even if you 're right. Follow me meaning?'"

Another officer, this time in the Army, who is down here, confirmed one of my brother Robert's stories in *Goodbye To All That*. He was talking about professional survivors and saying that there was an officer named Cross in the 52nd Light Infantry (the Second Battalion of the Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry, which insisted on its original style as jealously as the 23rd Foot kept the "c" in "Welch"). Cross is alleged to have refused leave on these grounds: "My father fought with the regiment in the South African War and had no leave; my grandfather fought in the Crimea with the regiment and had no leave. I do not regard it in the regimental tradition to take home leave when on active service." The last time that Robert heard of him was in 1917. Well now, this Army Major was telling me last evening that he met the aforesaid Cross only last week. He is a Lieutenant-Colonel in the Pioneer Corps, with a D.S.O. and Bar and spent the long week-end between 1918 and 1939 as a gentleman farmer in Cheshire. The Major asked him if the story was true about his refusing to take leave throughout 1914-18, and he admitted the soft impeachment.

It was the Wing Commander, by the way, who told me that if you ring up the Air Ministry and ask for Pilot Officer Prune (the famous fictitious character in the R.A.F. who always does everything wrong), you will be put straight through to his office at the Air Ministry. Actually, it means that you contact Anthony Armstrong, who invented the character in the first instance.

Other visitors down here include a leading Birmingham celebrity who is one of the many who have rapidly sent in their names in the hopes of being adopted as Government candidate in place of the late "Flash" Kellett, D.S.O., who has been killed in action in the Middle East. There are also one or two housemasters from leading public schools, and a Scottish surgeon. They all speak, as do the residents here, of the appalling shortage of domestic servants. At one public school it seems that only four of the houses have cooks. In all the other cases the unfortunate housemaster's wife has to prepare and do all the cooking herself during the morning, and then go out shopping for the forty or fifty boys in the afternoon.

I suggested that the boys might be taught to cook in the same way that they have learnt cleaning and dusting. The reply was that parents did not send their boys to a public school to spend their time learning how to cook. The retort was obvious—parents would presumably be only too pleased to have their boys taught anything so practical as cooking and preparing vegetables once or twice a week. The housemaster, however, could not agree.

Here, in the whole of this holiday resort, there are only three residents who have their own cook. The rest have to fend for themselves. The housewives of England are certainly having an increasingly tough time in this war, and, with the exception of the Queen's broadcast, they have had very few kind words said to them.

One of the chief topics of conversation, apart from the appetite of the men of the Commandos, is the new Common Wealth Party. For what it is worth, there seems to be a general tendency to consider that none of the three leading Parties did well between 1918 and 1939; and many people would be inclined to vote for a Common Wealth candidate merely as a change, and to show a lack of confidence in the Conservative, Liberal, and Labour Parties.

Naturally, in the absence of Home Guard duties, not to mention cinemas and theatres, I have had a chance of reading a book or two, and was tremendously impressed by *The Three Bamboos*. My purchase of it in London was not without amusement. I asked at a book-shop if it was available and, if so, whether it was worth reading. The girl behind the counter said: "I have got it, but don't recommend it." I said "Why?" She said: "It is all about the Japanese. Of course," with a fling of her head, "if you can bear to read a book about the Japanese . . ." I bought it.

TRAINING FOR THE INVASION OF THE CONTINENT? Every hazard imaginable that the present-day soldier is likely to experience during an invasion is now being used during training in Britain. Here a soldier is shown emerging from a 30-ft. drain through which running water has kept him company, and at the end of which is an assortment of tin cans!

A LIEUTENANT-COLONEL (on left) with one of his men, crosses a river by rope-bridge under which charges of explosive have been laid

The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this publication should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export

COLONEL the PRINCESS ELIZABETH: *And other Pictures from the Home Front*

THE AMERICAN "WAVES" TO LEARN FROM THE BRITISH "WRENS." Mrs. James V. Forrestal (on left) is the wife of the Under-Secretary of the U.S. Navy: she is now in London to study the organisation of the W.R.N.S. for the purpose of applying some of our methods to the American counterpart of the Wrens, known throughout the United States as the Waves. Here she is seen with Mrs. Laughton Matthews, Director of the W.R.N.S., examining an officer's hat and uniform

WOMEN'S WAR WORK ON THE RAILWAYS: Pushing a bogie-load of adzed and bored sleepers into the metal cylinder for creosoting

WOMEN DRIVING BOLTS INTO SLEEPERS for re-laying sections of line: At a south of England Southern Railway engineering depot there are about eighty women employed out of a total staff of 130, and each one of them has taken the place of a man released for shipbuilding and associated trade work. These "Jills of all Trades" are doing all kinds of heavy work, such as lifting bolted crossings, switches and stock rails on to large planing machines, and using big circular saws. Practically all the staff in the chairing and sleeping shop are women, turning out 1,000 sleepers per day. These sleepers are loaded fifty-eight at a time on four-wheeled trolleys on the 2-ft.-gauge railway serving the creosoting cylinders. Each of these cylinders is 72 ft. long and 7 ft. in diameter, and is closed at each end by a door weighing three tons, handled by three women. One striking feature is a "floating gang" of four women, performing heavy manual tasks such as handling 46-lb. chairs, concreting and constructional work. At other times they remove bark from newly-arrived trees hewn from the Southern line side. A large proportion of these women have husbands in the Forces or shipbuilding industries. Some are widows with young children, whilst others have been bombed out of their homes

COLONEL THE PRINCESS ELIZABETH INSPECTS A BATTALION OF HER OWN REGIMENT. At the saluting-base during the march-past. The Princess is Colonel of the Grenadier Guards: a few days ago she paid a visit to an armoured battalion of her regiment in the Southern Command. She made a full inspection, and then stood alone on the dais to take the salute as the battalion marched past. She also met cadets from Eton, who are attached for training. The Princess wore the regimental badge in her hat during her visit

RESERVOIR FISH BEING NETTED by employees of the Severn Fishing Board at Cheltenham for restocking lakes in the town's parks

THESE NETTED FISH WILL PROVIDE FISHING FACILITIES for anglers during the coming holiday season in Cheltenham's park lakes. Coarse fish have just been removed from Cheltenham's big reservoir in the hills to improve the trout fishing on the one hand, and also to provide fish for stocking the lakes in the town's parks: the idea is to enable local anglers to indulge in their pleasant sport during the coming "Holidays at Home" period

The World of Books—By Vernon Fane

SELECTIONS FOR DIFFERENT MOODS

The Letters of Lady Cowper and the Princess Lieven ; A Fantasia by C. S. Lewis ; The Adventures of an 18th-Century Marine ; A Scholarly Account of the Black Prince ; Mars versus Music ; Border Politics and German Occupation

TWO of the greatest of political hostesses in the golden age of Whiggery were Lady Cowper and the Princess Lieven. That they were also close friends and conducted an incessant and intimate correspondence is history's gain, since a great part of this has now been published, ably edited by Lord Sudley. THE LIEVEN - PALMERSTON CORRESPONDENCE (Murray. 18s.) is a fascinating volume of letters, giving as clear a picture of the times as ever did Greville or Creevey.

Lady Cowper, who was Lord Melbourne's sister, was the confidante of Palmerston, whom she later married. The strength of her friendship with the Russian princess is proved by the fact that during most of their acquaintance Princess Lieven regarded Palmerston as her most bitter enemy, and yet the two women did not allow this to break up their own intimacy.

There was more than a little reason for Princess Lieven's theory. Palmerston regarded her as a foreign meddler in English politics, and, as such, an acknowledged danger. He was instrumental in arranging the recall of her husband, then Russian Ambassador, to St. Petersburg, where he later became governor to the little Tsarevitch.

The Princess disliked Russia as much as she was infatuated with England. Her life there was lived in terms of exile, though it is revealing, and quite typical of her, that her letters during this period speak of much court splendour, and of the privileges which the imperial family accorded her.

After some years in Russia during which two of her sons died, and she herself became ill and melancholic, Princess Lieven moved her home to Paris, and in that lively air made a remarkable recovery, founding another salon, visiting Talleyrand, and becoming the intimate friend of the French statesman, Guizot. But her star was no longer in the ascendant, and while in England her friend moved smoothly from triumph to triumph, the Russian became querulous and unhappy.

Their letters provide endless material for quotation, if there were space enough. I confess to a preference for the Russian lady's style ; always observant, often malicious and wonderfully revealing of the personality of one of Europe's greatest *intrigantes.*

In his new novel—or fantasy—Mr. C. S. Lewis explores the rarefied air of the planets, and

WHAT THEY TAKE WITH THEM : A scene at an R.A.F. station just before a Berlin raid, showing a selection of the things given to the air crews to eat during the trip over and back. Amongst these are chocolates, orange juice, sweets, oranges, chewing gum, barley sugar and coffee

accompanies his hero on a visit to a world that might be Venus.

PERELANDRA (Bodley Head. 8s. 6d.) is a sustained and idyllic dream in words of a mortal's life in another Garden of Eden, where " beasts are friendly and naked beauty is unashamed." He is assailed by temptation, and finds that evil takes the form of another mortal. He wrestles with him, overcomes him, and at last is allowed to come face to face with Venus and Mars themselves ; later he returns to earth and tells his friends of his experiences.

It is difficult to assess this book with detachment. There are those readers for whom books about other planets, and dream worlds that owe something to Wells, something to Jules Verne, and everything to the imagination, are meat and drink. There are others who reach for a metaphorical barge-pole. For the last twenty years I had thought that I belonged to the second category, but, while Mr. Lewis has not entirely converted me, he has shown me that a book may reflect a light of enchantment even on the most sceptical.

> *" He joined the Navy to see the world,*
> *And what did he see ?*
> *He saw the sea ! "*

In point of fact, the hero of Mr. R. W. Daly's novel joined the Marines ; but he indubitably saw the sea. The Marines of the late eighteenth century were at least as belligerent a lot as the men in that force to-day, and Master Peter Dickoe's adventures are as hair-raising as any of them.

Peter himself, though, is less colourful than might have been expected, and when not in the throes of violent action, he is rather a dull sea-dog. It is rather in the evocation of a romantic period, and in the vivid accounts of naval engagements that the value of SOLDIER OF THE SEA (Peter Davies 8s. 6d.) must lie.

Mr. John Cammidge has written an historical pageant, as he terms it, of the days of the Black Prince, who, by the way, was never so-called during his life-time. THE BLACK PRINCE (Eyre and Spottiswoode. 18s.) is a scholarly and a rewarding book, if one is not deterred by the flamboyance of the wrapper, more suggestive of a Boy's Book of Jolly Fine Heroes, than a sober and adult evaluation of a military genius.

It is this aspect of Edward Plantagenet's life in which Mr. Cammidge has been absorbed, and the book's great merit lies in the full and apparently well-documented accounts of his campaigns in France and Spain. The author's style is robust rather than polished, but its liveliness and zest suit the subject admirably.

WHILE THE MUSIC LASTED (Chapman and Hall. 8s. 6d.) is the story of the conflict in a man's mind between music and fighting. He is a young composer, an ambitious and talented one, and in the end he chooses the R.A.F., is brought down and reported a prisoner of war as the book closes.

This, understandably, is a book shot through and through with the discussion and appreciation of music ; even telephone bells and sirens are described in those terms, and, consequently, it is a piece of work more likely to be enjoyed by the musically educated. Miss Kitty Barnes, however, has given us a plot that is valid enough in its own right to entertain even those who could not look a minim in the face.

In A SONG FOR THE ANGELS (Joseph. 8s. 6d.), Mr. F. L. Green has written the story of any small European border town in the few weeks of 1940 before, and during, the German occupation. His novel concerns two leaders of opinion in the town, Hartrigg and Wimbushe, men who are antagonistic to each other's points of view. With the opening of the story, Hartrigg, a peace-loving and gentle creature, sets off to see the general in command of the aggressive forces. The German soldiers themselves think his mission a sure sign of madness, but the general receives him in order to ask for his co-operation when the town is occupied. Reluctantly Hartrigg gives this, but when he finds that the general has broken his part of the bargain, and the town is bombed, he revolts, and proclaims his faith to his fellow citizens that, as long as they refuse mentally or morally to acknowledge the German victory, they cannot really be defeated. At the same time, Wimbushe has organised the men of the town into a movement of armed opposition, and the book closes with both Wimbushe and Hartrigg being led out to execution, finally reconciled to each other's aims.

The story is built on the theme of resistance, both ethical and physical, to a conqueror's domination, and, as such, there are points of resemblance to Mr. Steinbeck's *The Moon is Down.* Like that book, it is also very moving, in spite of a style that, in this case, is occasionally stilted.

AMERICAN JEEPS TO HELP IN AGRICULTURAL WORK IN BRITAIN : American troops are embarking on a large-scale agricultural programme, in co-operation with the British Army, and are using their powerful little Jeeps for clearing and ploughing thousands of acres at Army camps and depots. They will specialise in growing beans, peas, onions, radishes and, in a suitable place, corn on the cob. Major H. H. Hutchison, Agricultural Officer for the U.S. Forces, states that the exchange of ideas on growing between American and British soldier agriculturalists will be very valuable. This picture, taken at a West Country American depot, shows American and British troops preparing new land

POLES IN UNIFORM (Nelson. 12s. 6d.) is the war sketch-book of an artist who is a cadet officer in the Polish Army, and one of the official artists attached to their forces. In this collection are studies that Mr. Aleksander Zyw has made of Polish fighters in the Army, the Navy and the Air Force ; many of them stationed or based on Scotland. Muirhead Bone, in a friendly and appreciative introduction to the album, writes : " The toils and endurances of the brave soldiers of Poland look at us through these pages, and we return the glance with one of admiration and respect."

The sketches have all the freshness and vitality of work done on the spot, sometimes quite evidently in circumstances of discomfort. The book is well-produced, and a distinguished record of some of the war activities of a gallant ally.

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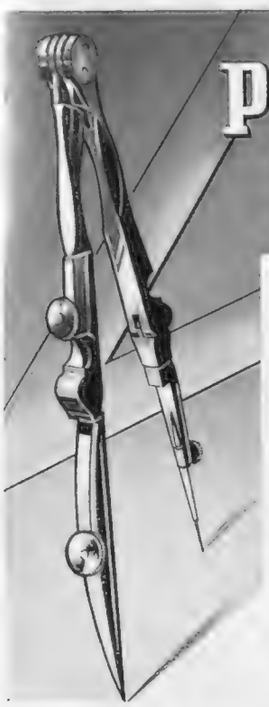

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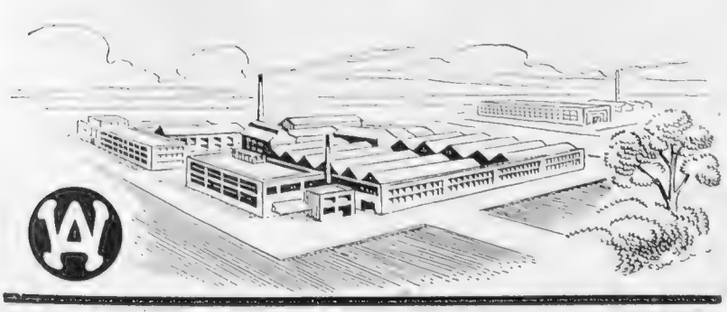

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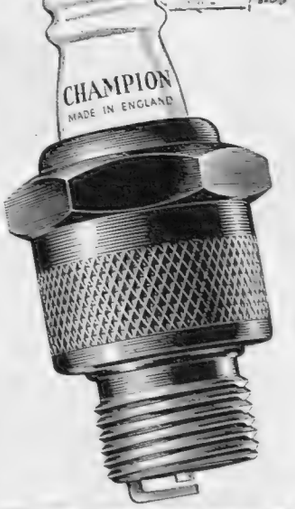

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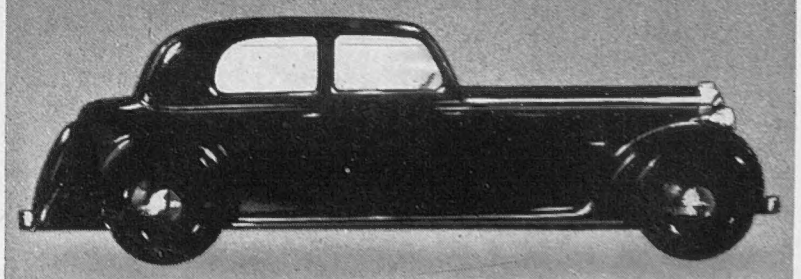

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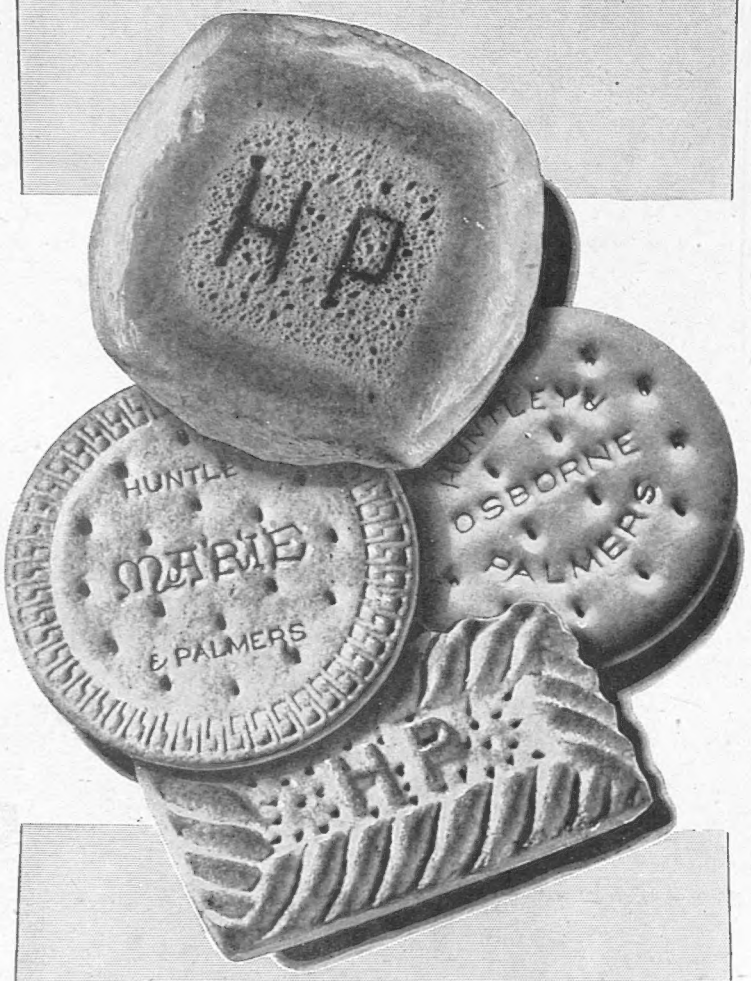

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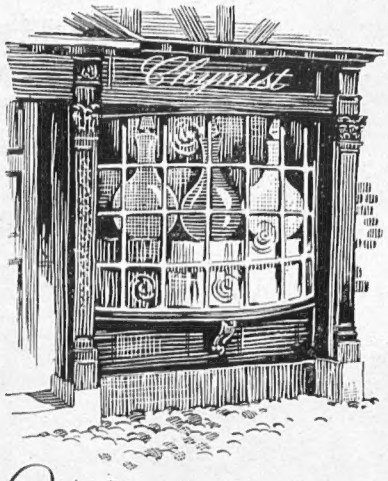

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